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Woodbarrow Farm

PLAY IN THREE ACTS

BY

JEROME K. JEROME

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Woodbarrow Farm

THE VAUDEVILLE

A Comedy in Three Acts

BY

JEROME K. JEROME

January 13th, 1891

Piffin	Mr. Thomas Thorne.
Allen Rollitt	Mr. Bernard Gould.
Luke Cranbourne	Mr. Cecil M. York.
Mike Stratton	Mr. F. Hamilton-Knight.
Mr. Purtwee	Mr. J. S. Blythe.
Hon. Tom Gussett	Mr. F. Gilmore.
Baron Von Schnorr	Mr. F. Grove.
Richard Hanningford	Mr. F. Hamilton-Knight.
Ichabod	Mr. C. Ramsey.
Peters	Mr. J. Wheatman.
Colonel Jack Dexter	Mr. Fred Thorne.
Clara Dexter	Miss Vane.
Mrs. Rollitt	Miss Emily Thorne.
Rachael	Miss Williamson.
Deborah Deacon	Miss Ella Banister.

12-34769

SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY

ACT I

Woodbarrow Farm, Exmoor

ACT II

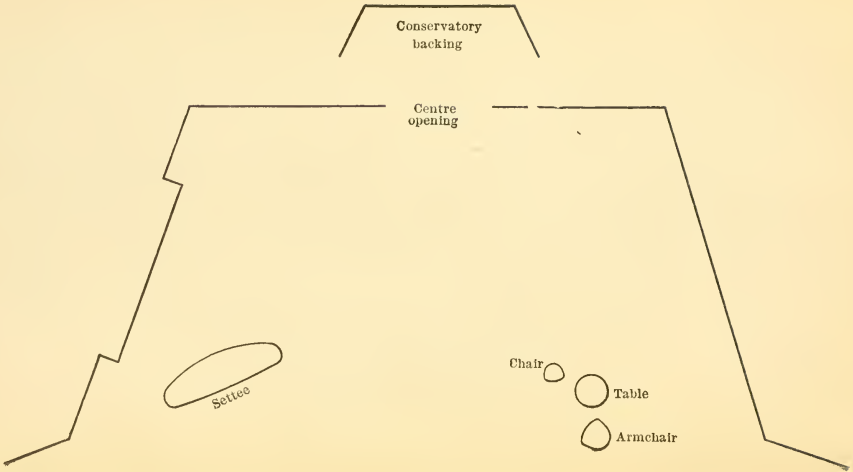
13a, St. James' Mansions

ACT III

Scene 1—Same as Act II., or
Library at 13a, St. James' Mansions

Scene 2—Woodbarrow Farm

Time: *The Present*


Conservatory
backing
Centre
opening
Settee
Chair
Table
Armchair

Woodbarrow Farm

ACT I.

MUSIC TO OPEN ACT: OLD ENGLISH AIR.

SCENE: *Kitchen at Woodbarrow Farm. An ideal old farmhouse kitchen. From the smoke-blackened ceiling beams hang huge sides of bacon, strings of onions, and herbs, and poultry. Over the great fireplace are the guns, and in profusion everywhere are the homely furnishings of a prosperous farmhouse kitchen. A huge fire burns* R. *in old-fashioned fireplace, with settle on each side. Door* L.C. *at back opening on corner of farmyard. Latticed window looking out on yard to* R. *of door. Table* R.C. *piled with linen waiting to be folded. Linen press* L. *Door* L. *below press. Settle in front of press.* MRS. ROLLITT *at table* R.C. *discovered ironing. She folds up clothes as she finishes with them, and crosses and places them one by one in press* L.

MRS. R. Rachael! Rachael!! (*Crossing* L. *then crosses to* R. *at back of table* R.C.) Ah, drat the girls—allus philandering about with the boys when they're wanted. Rachael!

(*Enter* RACHAEL, *she comes slowly forward to* L.C.)

RACH. Did you call, ma'am?

MRS. R. (*At table.*) Did I call? Why thee be geting deaf in thee old age sure, Rachael.

RACH. I was in the dairy, ma'am.

MRS. R. In the dairy! Well, and the dairy bean't

a mile off, be it? I expect there wur Joe's thick head 'twixt you and the sound of my voice, warn't there?

RACH. No, ma'am.

MRS. R. Whose wur it, then?

RACH. Ichabod's, ma'am. I—I mean Mr. Ichabod was helping me, ma'am.

MRS. R. What at? (*Pause.*) How often am I to tell 'ee I won't have that hulking scamp hanging about here after his work's done. Do 'ee understand?

RACH. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. R. Here's getting on for 8 o'clock, and thee master may be home any minute as hungry as a hunter, poor lad, and noothing ready for his supper. Get down the ham (RACHAEL *goes to fireplace* R.), and bring me in the frying-pan and I'll do it myself.

RACH. (*Turning to go.*) Yes, ma'am.

MRS. R. And don't be half-an-hour about it. Is Ichabod gone?

RACH. Oh yes, ma'am.

(*Mrs. R. turns to her work,* ICHABOD *appears at door at back, with a trout in his hand.* RACHAEL *catching sight of him stops, and motions him to go away.*)

MRS. R. Ah, a good thing for un as he has, if I catch un here again to-night, I'll—(RACHAEL *makes sign to* ICHABOD *who is up* C. MRS. R. *looks at* RACHAEL.)—Lord help the lass, be she struck foolish? Bean't 'ee agoing?

RACH. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. R. Well then, do ut. Thee keeps on saying, "yes, ma'am," "yes, ma'am," and there 'ee sticks. (*Drops eyes.* RACHAEL *makes sign to* ICHABOD. MRS. ROLLITT *catches her.*)

(ICHABOD *does not understand* RACHEL, *and tries to explain to her in pantomime about the trout, which he holds up and points to.* MRS. ROLLITT *follows* RACHAEL'S *eyes, and sees* ICHABOD. RACHAEL *is struck dumb, and* ICHABOD *grins and pulls his hair.*)

MRS. R. If thee don't take theeself off pretty soon, my boy, I'll do that for un. (*He makes no answer but continues pulling his hair and grinning, making a few steps forward and still holding out the trout.* MRS. ROLLITT *advances to him slowly.*)

MRS. R. (*Comes* C.) How often am I to tell 'ee I won't have 'ee loafin' about here after thee work's done, and thee mother waiting for thee at home, thee good-for-nothing young—(*eyeing the trout*)—aye, but he be a bonny un that.

ICH. Thowt maybe he'd do for the measter's supper, ma'am. He wur a-having his own not half-an-hour agone, ma'am.

MRS. R. (L. *with fish in hand.*) Her be a three pound un, Ichabod.

ICH. As full as an egg, her be, just. Thee feel her, ma'am.

MRS. R. Ah, well, I won't say but what thee art a thoughtful lad, Ichabod, and it will be main good for thee measter's supper. See there's a clear fire. (*Crosses* R. *Enter* DEBORAH *from staircase* L.) Rachael, and bring me the stew pan and we'll boil un.

DEB. No, don't boil it, aunt. (*Takes fish from* MRS. R.) Let me fry it. Allen allus likes 'em best that way. (*Goes* R. C. *up stage.*)

MRS. R. So un does, lass, so un does. Ah, thee knaw what the lad loikes, thee shall fry it. (*Hands trout to* DEB.) And I'll finish the linen while I've got my hand on it. (*At back of table* R. C.)

DEB. Allen will like that, I know. Where did you get it?

ICH. (*Confused and grinning.*) What, me, Miss?

DEB. Not poached, I hope, Ichabod?

ICH. (*Offended.*) Poached, Miss? No, Miss, I wur trying to teach a fly of mine to swim, that wur all, Miss, and when I took un from the water there wur this thing hanging on to the end of un, and I couldn't get 'un off.

MRS. R. (*At table* R. C.) Thee'd best stop awhile now, Ichabod, and the girls will gie un a bit sup. Thee mother will be main glad to be rid o' ye a bit, I take it.

ICH. Thank ye, ma'am. Mother's allus glad to be rid of me at supper toime. (*To* DEBORAH.) Gie me un, Miss, I'll clean un for ye. (*Takes fish from* DEBORAH, *goes down* L. *at back of settle.*)

RACH. Shall I cook un, Miss?

MRS. R. Na, na, thee bring the pan in here, Rachael, I woan't trust the master's supper to 'ee, while there's a pair of breeches about the room.

RACH. (*Crosses* L. *with a toss of her head.*) I'm sure I don't want 'em there at all. (*Picks up buckets near door* L. *down stage.*)

MRS. R. Ah, thee wouldn't ha' the lad theer wi'out 'em! Go and do as I tell 'ee.

[RACHAEL *hits* ICHABOD *with bucket.* *Exeunt* RACHAEL *and* ICHABOD L. *door down stage.*]

MRS. R. The lad will enjoy it all the more if thee cook it

for un. Ah, and he do enjoy his food too. It do me good to see un eat.

DEB. He does you a lot of good that way, doesn't he, aunt?

MRS. R. (*Laughing.*) Ah, yes, he be like his father wur before him, a rare trencher man. Ah, but they're better than those as doesn't eat much, but sits a-turning and a-smelling, and a-grumbling at everything that's set before them, for all the world like an overfed turkey cock trying to eat potato peelings. Thee wean't ha' much trouble looking arter un when I'm gone.

DEB. (*Goes to fireplace* R.) Oh, aunt, how naughty you are, always talking of being "gone," just as if you were an old woman.

MRS. R. No, no, lass, I bean't talking of being gone now. I've many a year before me yet, please God. But it must come sometime, thee knaws, and I like to think that when it do there'll be someone to gie the lad his bit of food, and look arter un loike—and, Lord, a man do want a power of looking arter to be sure.

DEB. (*At fire* R. *making it up.*) I think that's why we love 'em, aunt, because they're so helpless.

MRS. R. (*Cross to* L.) Ah, maybe it is. There must be summut to account for it.

DEB. And I suppose they be like the poultry. They get fond of us because we feed them. He does say I've got a good hand for cooking, aunt.

MRS. R. (*Cross to* R.) Ah, yes, lass. It be a light hand for the kitchen and a cool hand for the dairy. It will make a good hand for a farmer's wife. (*Takes* DEBORAH'S *hand at table* R.)

DEB. I don't think Allen will want a farmer's wife, aunt.

MRS. R. Lord, whose wife should a farmer want, then?

DEB. (*Pokes fire* R.) I don't think Allen wants to be a farmer at all. He says he wants to be a somebody, not a nobody.

MRS. R. Well, bean't a farmer somebody?

DEB. Somebody, aunt, but not a somebody. Allen wants to be in the world, you know, aunt.

MRS. R. Well, and he be in the world sure, ain't he? Sure I think I ought to know. (*Cross to* L.)

DEB. No, not in the world he means, aunt. Not in the great world as they call it.

MRS. R. Ah! he be in God's world, that ought to be big enough for un. (*Cross to* R.)

DEB. (*A little spitefully.*) Yes, aunt, but it's not select

enough. There's all sorts of common people in God's world. Allen wants to be in the big world of lords and ladies and big folk up in London. He says it's being buried alive down here; that he wants to be among the stir and bustle.

MRS. R. (*Cross to* L., *putting clothes in press.*) Ah! that be only his talk. The young uns be all alike. They run arter shadows like the chickens do arter chaff. (*Cross* L.) Why, I mind when I wur a lass, I used to look in the glass and think I'd be a duchess. But the dook didn't come, so I just married thee uncle. The young ducks all fancies as they'll paddle off to the sea, but they live and dies in the old pond arter all. (*Crosses to* R.)

DEB. (*Laughing.*) And you think that your duck will live and die in the Woodbarrow pond, aunt? (*Helps* MRS. ROLLITT *to fold.*)

MRS. R. Ah, bless un, yes, the lads they fancy that any place is better than the old home; but arter they've had a good look round, they know that the old home's better than any place else. He'll flutter about a bit maybe (*looks at* DEBORAH), but he'll settle down in the nest 'fore long, and the children will be running about the house (DEBORAH *turns away a little*) and making it untidy—bless 'em—afore I close my eyes.

DEB. (*Demurely.*) I wonder who he'll marry.

MRS. R. Ah, I wonder now. (*Crosses to put linen in chest of drawers.*)

DEB. (R. *folding linen.*) There's Polly Steddles. He walked home from church with her last Sunday. I think he's a little sweet on Polly Steddles, don't you, aunt?

(MRS. R. *comes* L. *of table* R.)

MRS. R. Ah, it bean't much good being a little sweet on a girl that size. It would take a power of sweetness to go round her. (*Crosses* L. *with linen.*)

DEB. She's big, but then men like big women, don't they, aunt?

MRS. R. (L.) Ah, some on 'em goes in for quantity, and some on 'em goes in for quality. The little ones, they go in for size cause they bean't much of it themselves; and the big ones goes in for sense, cause that be what they be most in need of. (*Goes* R.) And Allen, he be's medium, so he can just please himself.

DEB. And there's Miss Dexter, that he drives over to Minehead so often. (MRS. ROLLITT *goes* L.) He thinks a lot of her, I know.

MRS. R. (L.) What, Colonel Dexter's darter, oop at Lucott's Hill? Oh, yes, her'd be a fine un to make the butter and cure the hams, her would. Her be loike them umbrellas they be a selling at Peter's for 1s. 11d.—only meant to be walked out wi'. (*Near press* L.)

DEB. Ah, but she's so beautiful, aunt, and she's a lady! (*Sighs.*)

MRS. R. Ah! (*goes to table* R. C.) there be a good many sorts o' them.

DEB. She is a lady, isn't she, aunt?

MRS. R. Her's got the clothes all right. (*Sits* L. *of table* R. *A pause—goes up and pats* DEBORAH'S *cheek.*) As if thee didn't know the lad were in love with theeself.

DEB. (*Tossing her head.*) Sure an' I don't see how I should—he never says anything.

MRS. R. Ah, the men bain't much to say for theirselves, poor things. Thee must go by what they does. Why, thee uncle kept company wi' me for three years, an' un never said a word. The first year un only sot and stared, and the second year un put un's arm round my waist, and the third year un kissed me, and then mother said it were time to put up the banns, and her done it.

DEB. (*Laughs.*) Ah, the man that wants to marry me will have to ask me ever and ever so many times and plead, oh, as if his life depended on it (*tossing her head—at fire.*)

MRS. R. Ah, the lad be shy, that be all. He be frightened 'o thee.

DEB. (*Smiling.*) Of me, aunt?

MRS. R. Ah, sure!—(*Laughs.*)—I expect un be worrying hisself finely for fear thee doan't care for un, a fancying thee prefers Jim Harkabuck, maybe.

DEB. (*Demurely—goes up* R. *and gets* L. *of* MRS. ROLLITT.) Jim Harkabuck is a very nice fellow, and he does stare. (*Smiling, and going to her aunt.*) Do you think Allen really—really does—Aunt? (*Kneels to* MRS. ROLLITT, *who turns her head away* R. *a little.*)

MRS. R. (*Laughing, and shaking her off playfully. Pauses.*) Does he! Why beant he allus quarreling wi' thee, and doan't he eat twice as much o' anything if he knows thee cooked it—and besides—(*Pauses and becomes absorbed in stockings.*)

DEB. Besides what, aunt?

MRS. R. Why didn't I find un only the evening afore last when un didn't know I wur there. (*Laughing.*) A—

(*Enter* RACHAEL L. *door with fish in frying-pan.*—DEBORAH *rises.*)

RACH. (*Crossing* R. *and giving it to* DEBORAH.) Shall I put it on, Miss?

DEB. (*c. goes* R. *to fireplace.*) No, I'll see to it, Rachael, thank you.

RACH. I have put some butter in the pan, Miss.

(*Exit* RACHAEL L. *down stage.*)

DEB. Yes, aunt. (R. *of table and seeing to fish with back to* MRS. ROLLITT.) You—you were saying how you came upon Allen the other evening, aunt, when he didn't know you were there, and he was doing something.

MRS. R. Ah, yes, it wur Toosday, and he—not in love wi' 'ee—(*laughing*)—why—(*taking up stocking and looking at hole.*) Ah, look at that now, blest if I can make out where the holes come from, just.

DEB. What was he doing, aunt?

MRS. R. Why there un wur wi' your—

(*Enter* PURTWEE C.—*who coughs.*)

MRS. R. (*Turning, and seeing him as he stands in doorway.*) What, Mr. Purtwee! (DEBORAH *in despair goes to fire and cooks fish.*) Well, 'ee do surprise me! 'Ee be quite a stranger. Come in. Thee be just in time for a bit of sup.

MR. P. (*Coming down* L. C., *puts hat on staircase rail.*) I couldn't pass the place without looking in, I've just left the trap outside. (*Shakes hands.*) And how are we?

MRS. R. Oh, I be middlin' well, thank 'ee, and how's yerself?

MR. P. Oh, nicely enough, and—(*To* DEBORAH *crossing* R.)—how's Miss Deborah Deacon?

DEB. Very well, thank you, Mr. Purtwee.

MR. P. That's all right—you look it, my dear (*Taking her hands.*) Why I declare she's getting quite a woman!

MRS. R. Ah! she's been that for some time. Her be thinking more about getting a man now. (PURTWEE *crosses to* L. C. *laughing.*)

DEB. Oh, aunt!

MRS. R. Did 'ee see the lad up town?

MR. P. What, Allen?

MRS. R. Ah, that be the only lad in the world I know. Did 'ee see un? (*Goes up* L.)

MR. P. Yes, I met him, and I wanted to have a chat

with him. (MRS. ROLLITT *is up* L. *near linen press.*) But, Lord! There he was off to Lucott's Hill, and there was no holding him. (*Taking off his coat.*)

DEB. (*Who has been engaged in her cooking, at this suddenly stops, and looks up.*) What was he going up there for?

MR. P. (*Stopping and facing round.*) What for?

DEB. (*Excitedly, but quietly.*) Who was he going to see up there?

MR. P. (*Laughing and folding coat.*) Ah! who is it he always goes to see up there?

(DEBORAH *turns a little sick at this confirmation of her fears.* PURTWEE, *who is a sharp old fellow, notices the expression of her face and the whole truth flashes across him. He pauses suddenly, looks hard at her, then assuming an ordinary laughing tone, continues*—MRS. ROLLITT (*up* L.) *is engaged with the linen, and does not notice this.*)

MR. P. Why, the Walleys, of course. He and Jim seem to be inseparable of late.

DEB. Oh, yes, I know. I asked him to try and see if the Walleys would part with one of their short-horns.

MR. P. Ah! that was it, then—yes, I remember that was it. (*Turns away and looks back at* DEBORAH, *who has resumed her cooking—aside.*) Poor child! There's trouble for her I fear. (*Throws coat over chair* L.)

MRS. R. (*Comes* C.) Well, what be going on up at Minehead?

MR. P. The same that is going on everywhere, Mrs. Rollitt—people lying and slandering and evil-speaking; everybody thieving and cheating and quarreling. (*Sits on table* L.)

MRS. R. Well, I guess I could have told thee that. Haven't thee any real news to gie us. Tell us what one person's be a-doing. Never mind "everybody," I don't know him.

MR. P. Well, you see, Susan, a lawyer mustn't gossip. (*Shakes finger.*)

(DEBORAH *crosses to linen press* L., *sets tablecloth and lays table* R. C. *for meal.*)

MRS. R. (C.) Oh, hoity, toity! What be the use of being a lawyer and knowing things if 'ee never tells a body a bit o' news? And now I come to think of it, I've got a bone to pick wi' thee about that very thing. Thee never told me old Hanningford wur agoing to die

without leaving my boy so much as a brass farthing. Do you think as how I'd 'a' gone on sending the old skinflint the best turkey in the yard every Christmas, and the best goose come every Michaelmas, if I'd known as how he'd hadn't given us so much as the price as a suit o' black, and Allen his own cousin's child. (*Crossing* R.) A cousin is a cousin, even if it be a distant one. (*Sits* L. *of table* R.)

MR. P. Now, my dear Mrs. Rollitt, how could I tell he was going to die?

MRS. R. Thee knowed he wur going to die sometime, and thee knowed he hadn't left the boy anything, and thee might a' dropped me a hint. "Mrs. Rollitt," thee might ha' said, "thee's only wasting good poultry on a worthless man. The old sinner's a going to die as hard-fisted and ungrateful as he's lived." It would 'a' been a neighbourly act o' thee!

MR. P. (*Laughing.*) But I didn't know he wasn't going to leave you anything. You see he died intestate.

MRS. R. In——what?

MR. P. (*Rises.*) Intestate. (DEBORAH *laughs a little.*) Without leaving a will; he left nobody anything.

MRS. R. (*Rising.*) Well, then, where does the old fool's money go to?

MR. P. Why, to his son, of course! (*Cross to* R. *near chair, fireplace down stage.*)

MRS. R. Ah, where be his son?

MR. P. (*Folding his knee in his hand and looking at her quietly.*) On the road from Texas to Devon. (*Sits* R.)

MRS. R. What! Thee don't mean to say thee've found un! (DEBORAH *gets dish off dresser* R. *and puts it down in front of fire,* MRS. R. *in front of table* R., MRS. R. *and* DEBORAH *draw near interested.*)

MR. P. That's just exactly what I do mean. We traced him at last—found him at Port Chadbourne black as a nigger and dressed as a red Indian.

MRS. R. What was he doing there—play-acting?

MR. P. No, cow-boy. (MRS. R. *sits* L. *of table* R.)

MRS. R. Lord love us all! and do un know?

MR. P. Yes, my agent saw him—went down to meet him as he came through with a drove of cattle, gave him my letters and told him everything.

MRS. R. Has he written to you?

MR. P. No, didn't know how to write—a sort of half savage he seems to be, he and all his companions. He said he was going to give the boys a three days' drink, or

as he expressed it, "paint the town red," and then start straight for home.

MRS. R. When do you expect him?

MR. P. Any day now; it was six weeks ago my agent saw him. He might walk into my office to-morrow morning.

MRS. R. Lor! to think o' it all. Him running away—driven away, as a body might say, by 'is own father, when scarce more than a baby, and now coming back to all this money. When do 'ee expect un?

MR. P. To-morrow—in six months time—never!

MRS. R. Never! (PURTWEE *rises, crosses to* L.)

MR. P. Perhaps never.

MRS. R. Why I thought thee said he'd started.

MR. P. Started, yes; but there's a long road between that and arriving. He may be dead and buried—drowned—murdered—for all we can tell. They're a rough lot where he's coming from. (*Takes coat off settle* L. *Feels for snuff box in pockets; rises; goes* C.)

MRS. R. Well, thee's picturing a nice fate for the lad. An' who would the money all go to if he were gone?

MR. P. Why the next o' kin of course! He isn't married.

MRS. R. And who be the next of kin?

MR. P. (*Dryly.*) Oh! there's no need to worry about that now.

MRS R. Well, I'd just like to know, that's all. Would it be any of the Leeds folk?

MR. P. Oh, I really can't say! (*Gets snuff box, puts coat on settle* L.) I—I can't say at all who it would be. (*Angrily, rather.*) Why there's about a hundred different relations scattered all over the country, and goodness knows who it might turn out to be. It isn't a matter to be considered yet at all.

MRS. R. Lord bless us all, don't put theeself out, man. I didn't know as a body's relations wur any secret—(*pauses*)—provided they be coom by honestly. Doan't tell us if 'ee doan't want to. (*Turns away* R. *a little.*)

MR. P. No—no, Mrs. Rollitt! I'm not put out, only you see it's always a most complicated question a next of kin, especially in a case of this kind where the man shunned all his relations. It might be someone in Hong Kong; it might be someone here in Devonshire—(*Enter* ALLEN C. *door.*)—it might be,—(*he is* L., *taking handkerchief from his overcoat pocket, and turning sees* ALLEN *in doorway and stops.* DEBORAH *puts on the fish.*)

ALLEN. (*Coming down* R. C.) Well mother! (*Kisses her.*)

MRS. R. Why, my boy, wherever ha' ye been to—I wur getting quite anxious about 'ee!

ALLEN. (*Taking off his hat and coat and throwing them down at back.*) Ah, I be a rare anxiety to 'ee, baint I, mother? (*To* MR. PURTWEE.) Mother allus fancies as I've been run off with by gypsies if I be out more than an hour. (*Crossing and shaking hands with* MR. PURTWEE.) And how be Mr. Purtwee for the second time to-day?

MR. P. (*Laughing and shaking hands.*) Ah! your mother's a regular old hen with one chick I expect. (*Sits* L.)

ALLEN. Never thee mind, mother, thee be quite right to be careful o' me! There baint another son like me in the whole country, be there?

DEB. (*At fire.*) To the credit of old Devon be it said.

ALLEN. Halloa! (*Goes* R. *to* DEBORAH.)

MRS. R. Ah! now that just serves thee right for laughing at thee old mother. (*Crosses* L. *and sits knitting next to* PURTWEE.)

ALLEN. Ah! that be the worst of letting the children stop oop arter their proper toime, they allus gets so saucy. What have thee there? Lurd bust me, I have got a vacuum inside o' me. Poached eggs?

DEB. No; poached trout.

MR. P. Eh! what's that?

ALLEN. Hulloa! Thee've done it now. Why, Mr. Purtwee be Lord Netherby's lawyer, and he'll ha' thee hanged in chains on Dunkery Beacon, sure as fate.

DEB. Ah, well, you see I didn't poach him, I'm only frying him. There's no law against frying fish, is there?

ALLEN. (R.C.) Aye, well, us'll forgi'e thee this time, if ee'll promise to do it again soon. Come and gi'e us a kiss.

DEB. Thee'll kiss the frying-pan if you come any o' your nonsense round here.

ALLEN. What! won't thee, when I tell 'ee I've bought Jim Whalley's tan and cream shorthorn for 'ee?

DEB. (*Pleased.*) No! Have you?

ALLEN. I bought her this afternoon, and I got her for—(L.C., *turning to his mother*) I say, mother, our Deb's bin and smoshed young Whalley.

MRS. R. Done what to un.

ALLEN. Smoshed him.

DEB. Why, I never touched him.

ALLEN. Yes thee have, thee've smoshed un—that be the new Lunnun word; made un in love wi' thee.

MRS. R. It's a funny way o' doing it.

ALLEN. I doan't know how her done it, but her done it. Why he wanted £25 for the cow at first, and when I told un her wur for Deb he looked as stupid as an old cow unself and said I could have her for £20, and then he asked me if she would like a calf. (*Goes* R.)

DEB. We could do with one. What did you say?

ALLEN. (*Laughing.*) I told un her'd better let the calf come down and ask for unself. (*Laughs boisterously.*) He never saw what I meant. (*All laugh.*)

DEB. Oh, I expect he saw it all right. Jim Whalley is a very sharp fellow; there was no need to insult him just because he'd done a kind action. (*Warmly—turns away* R. *a little.*)

ALLEN. Oh, I wouldn't ha' said it if I'd known. I didn't know thee was in love wi' him.

DEB. (*Half laughing and half indignant.*) Oh, don't be silly, Allen, as if I cared for Jim Whalley.

ALLEN. I might ha' guessed it too. Why, I expect that's why thee wanted the cow so as to have something about the place to remind thee o' un.

DEB. Oh, you great stupid!

ALLEN. Why, look how you're blushing. Look, look at her face, mother. (*Goes to back of settle* R. *takes up looking-glass which is hanging on settle* R., *brings it down and holds it before her.*) Look at yourself! (*she catches him a sound box on the ear. He puts his hand to his face, and crossing puts back glass.*) I didn't know thee was so strong. That all comes of those squab pies o' yourn, mother, I told thee thee wur putting too much meat in 'em.

MRS. R. (*Laughing.*) Ah, it's thy sauce lad, not my meat, that's done it. (*Rises.*) Thee'd better try and make thy peace, while me and Mr. Purtwee has a look round the out-buildings. (*To* MR. PURTWEE) I've been wanting to get hold of thee for a long time. Thee's never gi'en us so much as a bit o' paint for the last ten years, and the stable roof won't bear an owl on it. (*Goes up* C. *with* PURTWEE.)

ALLEN. (R. *near settle.*) Thee might show Mr. Purtwee the barn floor while thee's about it, mother. It be more like an earthquake than a floor.

MRS. R. Oh, I be a going to show him more than he wants to see, don't thee worrit. (*Aside to* MR. PURTWEE *at door* C.) Ah, they'd make a pretty couple, wouldn't they?

MR. P. (*Looking at them.*) No, no, we must make 'em one.

(*Exit* MRS. ROLLITT *and* MR. PURTWEE C. *door.*)

ALLEN. (*After a pause,* R.C.) Well I've got thee the cow, anyhow, and it's a beauty.

DEB. (*At fire in a tone of severe and offended dignity.*) Thank you, Mr. Rollitt, it is very kind of you.

ALLEN. (*After a pause, with exaggerated politeness.*) Don't mention it, Miss Deacon—quite a pleasure!

(ALLEN *crosses to* L., *whistles—a pause—pretends to take off leggings. Puts foot on settle.*)

DEB. Thee may bring me over the butter.

ALLEN. (*Looking up.*) Hulloa! come back again! Butter, certainly! (*Takes it from chair off* L. *on staircase, crosses with it, and holds it for* DEBORAH *while she takes some.*) Jolly good butter this week; who made it? Thee?

DEB. (*Other side of plate.*) Of course I did! I make all the butter now, and the cream.

ALLEN. What, wi' them little hands. They don't look big enough to do anything but be kissed.

DEB. (*Looking up and smiling.*) They can do something else, can't they?

ALLEN. Ah! They be like the parson's, not as soft as they looks. (*Puts down butter on the table—pause—during which* DEBORAH *proceeds with her cooking, and* ALLEN *stands watching her.*) What a jolly little farmer's wife thee'd make.

DEB. Yes; I only want the jolly little farmer.

ALLEN. Ah, thee won't find many of that sort about. Farming don't pay enough for a man to get jolly on, now-a-days.

DEB. Oh, we have enough to eat and drink, and a little to spend on foolishness. You want so much.

ALLEN. (*Goes* L.) Not more than what a many has. Not more than a little bit of what this young Hanningford is coming back to—enough to let a man see what the world's like a bit, instead of being cooped oop all one's life, like an old cow, in one corner of it.

DEB. But you can't live all over it, and one corner must be much as good as another.

ALLEN. (*Crosses* R.) Ah, thee don't understand it, lass. Thee women folk can stand day arter day the same, but we lads are restless wi' it. We feel as there's summat big and stirring going on somewhere, and we long to be among it—to be in the great world. It seems to call to me—(*puts foot on settle* L.)—to come to it, sometimes. I hear it of a night when I'm watching the sheep on the

hill fields. Maybe it's only the sea breaking on the rocks down by Glenthorn—or the wind among the old oaks, but it sounds like a distant far-off voice—(*gets* L. *of table* R. *with back to* DEBORAH)—calling to me, and it rings and echoes in my ears, till I feel at times that I must start up then and there and follow it. (DEBORAH R. *of table* R. ALLEN L. *of table* R.)

DEB. (*Very gravely, laying her hand on his arm.*) Allen, lad, don't you remember reading one evening to us of the sirens, who in the old days used to haunt the sea caves, and sing so sweetly that the sailors who once paused to listen, were lured on and on till they were wrecked among the cruel rocks? May not the voices that you hear be like the singing of those sirens?

ALLEN. Maybe, lass; but the sailors couldn't help but follow when they did hear it. (*Sits in chair* L. *of table* R.)

DEB. (*After a pause.*) What be the matter, Allen? Thee used to be contented enough. Now thee's always talking about riches, and wanting to go away from the dear old farm. Somethin's come over thee, lad. (*Puts hand on* ALLEN'S *shoulder.*)

ALLEN. No, I wur allus like an old crow—(DEBORAH *takes her hand away*)—sitting on a fence, and looking at summat too far off to see. But thee be right partly, lass. Summat has come over me, and made me want what I can't get more than ever now.

DEB. (*Very kindly,* R.) What be it? (*With elbows leaning on table,* R.)

ALLEN. (*Rises, goes* L. C.) Well, I be in love, lass. (*Still looking away from her.*)

DEB. (*After a pause, during which she has smiled to herself with a happy little sigh, and clasped her hands together in a sort of little joyful ecstacy, unnoticed by* ALLEN.) In love!

ALLEN. I fancy it must be that. I think of her all day and I dream of her all night, and I'm jolly miserable. (*At settle,* R.)

DEB. (*Demurely.*) Have you any reason to suppose that she returns your affection?

ALLEN. I don't know, her's never said anything.

DEB. Have you?

ALLEN. Me! No, I haven't said anything.

DEB. Most extraordinary that she doesn't propose. Have you given her any encouragement? (*Leans against settle* R.)

ALLEN. Noa—I can't say as I have, much. (*Goes* R.C.) I've looked at her, you know—soft like—and sighed. (*Does so.*) But her's mostly been looking t'other way and

an't seen it, and as for saying anything to her—well, I can talk to her all right about other things and joke and laugh wi' her, but the moment I goes to say I love her—it—it seems as if I'd got a hot potato stuck in my throat. (*Speaking as if she had, turns away to* L. *corner of* R. *table, back to* DEBORAH. *His manner throughout this scene carries out the idea that it is* DEBORAH *he is in love with.*)

DEB. (*After a pause, with a coquettish smile to herself.*) I—I can't do anything to help thee, I suppose? (*Goes and leans against settle* R.)

ALLEN. Do thee think as her could care for a mere common farmer, Deborah?

DEB. (*Turning and looking at him earnestly—comes to front of table* R.) Well—I think if he were a good farmer, and pleaded very hard, I—

ALLEN. (*Delighted.*) No, lass! Do 'ee really think a girl could? (*Advancing to her.*)

DEB. (*Putting her hand to stop him with dignity.*) A girl might—though, of course, a superior sort of girl, such as she appears to be, might think it presumption for—(*turns away* R. *puts hand on corner of table* R.)

ALLEN. (*Depressed.*) Yes—I'm afraid her would. (*Turns away* L.)

DEB. (*Eagerly turning around again.*) Then, of course, she mightn't. You never can tell till you try. (*Goes to fireplace* R. *Fish is changed.*)

ALLEN. (*Scratching his head.*) Blest if I know how to go about it! I say, Deb, you've been proposed to, how do they begin?

DEB. (*Bending over fire.*) Don't thee think thee'd better tell me who it is and let me ask her for thee? (*Looking slyly round, pauses.*) Who be her, Allen?

ALLEN. (*Going up to window* R.C.) Ah, I expect thee knows who her be!

DEB. (*Beginning softly to creep toward him.*) How should I when thee's never told me? What be her name? (*Close to him, his back is still towards her and he doesn't see her.*) Eh?

ALLEN. (*Without turning, looking out of the back window up* R.C.) Clara. (*Music cue.*)

(*Bus.* DEB. *stands still—for the first moment she hardly comprehends. Then she understands, and stands staring straight before her with a wild scared look—shivers, crosses back to fireplace on tip-toe and bends down over it attending to the fish—after* DEB. *sobs* ALLEN *comes down* C.—*music dies away.*)

ALLEN. (*Half turning round.*) Colonel Dexter's daughter, you know. Thee've seen her. Her wur at the

Barnstaple ball and I danced wi' her and thee said how beautiful her wur and that her dress was all made o' some'at or other, and you—(*he has gradually come close over to her* R.) What be the matter, Deb?

DEB. (*In a changed, hard tone, bending more intently than ever over her cooking.*) Nothing—Nothing.

ALLEN. (*Taking her hand.*) Why, thee be quite cold, lass; be thee ill?

DEB. (*Snatching her hand away.*) No, no, there's nothing the matter with me. Don't be so foolish, don't don't.

ALLEN. (*Surprised.*) I say, Deb, have I said anything I oughtn't to? I know I'm allus a-doing it. (*A pause—*ALLEN *stands looking at her, troubled and bewildered—*DEB. *bends closer over the fire—then takes the pan off the fire and with it in her hand turns to* ALLEN *smiling.*)

DEB. (*Gives dish to* ALLEN.) Yes, thee have—talking to a cook at the very moment the trout is on the turn. (*Puts trout on dish.*) Serve thee right if I'd spoilt it.

ALLEN. Lor', thee quite frightened me! (*Pauses.*) Yes—I went up there this afternoon. (DEB. *takes dish from* ALLEN, *puts it down in front of fireplace.*)

DEB. (*Arranging fish.*) Did you see her?

ALLEN. Yes, I saw her.

DEB. It doesn't seem to have made thee any more cheerful. Did thee quarrel.

ALLEN. Us never got a chance. There wur a cousin or summat of the kind hanging about all the time—just come over with some chap from America. Can't say as I like un much.

DEB. Thee'd best summon up thy courage and speak quick or thee may lose thy turn. (ALLEN *turns away* L.) Go and tell aunt supper's ready—be quick, it's all spoiling.

ALLEN. (*Moving quickly towards door* L. *down stage.*) Where shall I find her?

DEB. (*Sharply.*) How should I know?

ALLEN. (*Looks around surprised—sotto voce.*) How the fire do draw out a woman's temper, to be sure.

(*Exit* ALLEN L., *down stage.*)

DEB. (*Left alone stands* R. *a moment without speaking.*) What right has she to come down here and take him away? She doesn't love him. Couldn't she have found enough fine gentlemen in London to amuse her? I don't believe she's a good woman, and I hate her. (*Stamps her foot.*) She shan't have him—she—(*bursts into quiet tears and, slipping down on ground, buries her face in chair by fire—pause—after a few seconds* LUKE

CRANBOURNE *appears in door* C. *from* R., MIKE STRATTON *behind him.* LUKE *pauses on threshold and coughs.* DEB. *hastily rises, trying to hide her tears and stands* R. LUKE *comes forward slowly, followed by* MIKE *at some distance.*)

LUKE. (*After pause, coming forward* R.C.) I—beg pardon—there was nobody about. Are Mrs. Rollitt and Mr. Rollitt at home?

DEB. Yes, they are at home. I will go and find them. (*Crosses to* L.) Who shall I say it is?

LUKE. (R.C.) Ah, thank you very much, my dear. Would you say Mr. Cranbourne—Mr. Luke Cranbourne and Mr. Richard Hanningford?

DEB. (*Amazed.*) Dick Hanningford!

LUKE. (*Smiling.*) You know the name?

DEB. Old Mr. Hanningford's son? Why, we were only speaking of him just this instant, and wondering when he'd come back. (*To* LUKE *hesitatingly.*) Are—are you—

LUKE. No—this is Mr. Hanningford. (*Turns to* MIKE, *who stands awkward and shy* L.C. *looking at the ground.*) Did you know him? (*Laughs.*)

DEB. Oh, I'm Miss Deacon—Miss Deborah Deacon. We were school-fellows, you know. (*Timidly approaching* MIKE *with outstretched hand.*) I am very glad to see you Mr.—Mr. Hanningford.

MIKE. Thank you, Miss—I'm very pleased to see you.

LUKE. (*Sitting* R.) I suppose you hardly recognize our friend? (*Watches her intently without her noticing it.* MIKE *has turned away again, and looks down, flicking leg with cane.*)

DEB. (*Hesitating.*) Um! (*Laughs.*) Well, he's certainly altered since we used to go to school together. But yes—(*examining his face*)—there's something of the old face left, I think.

LUKE. We only arrived from America last night, traveling hard all the time. Pretty nearly worked me to death. Dick has—(*with a yawn*)—but there, I suppose I should have hurried up pretty smart myself if I'd been coming home to a fortune.

DEB. You are staying in the village then, I suppose?

LUKE. Yes, we've put up at Colonel Dexter's—my uncle's—slow place. (*Laughing.*) But better than the inn apparently.

DEB. Oh. then you are the—Miss Dexter's cousin that Allen—(*pauses hesitating*)—was—was speaking of?

LUKE. Oh, the young fellow that was there this after-

noon—was that Allen? (*With a would-be playful laugh.*) And who's Allen, eh?

DEB. (*A little stiffly.*) Allen is Mr. Rollitt.

LUKE. Oh, I wish I'd known that this afternoon. Dick's been dying to see him and his mother all day. I wanted him to wait till the morning, but he would come down to-night.

DEB. Oh, I'm sure Allen and Aunt will both be delighted. (*Approaching* MIKE, *who still stands aside and looks down.*) Won't you be seated, Mr. Hanningford? (*He makes no sign—hesitatingly.*) Dick. (MIKE *still takes no notice.* LUKE *has risen and crossed with assumed carelessness, towards him and now from opposite side of him to* DEBORAH *gives him a sharp kick.* MIKE *starts and looks up.*)

LUKE. (*Turning away carelessly.*) Lost in reveries of old scenes, Dick, eh? Miss Deacon is asking you if you won't sit down.

MIKE. (*Sitting* L.C.) Oh, I beg your pardon, Miss, I'm sure. Oh, thank you, I will.

DEB. (*Going.*) I shan't be a minute. They are only somewhere about the yard.

(*Exit* DEBORAH C. *door* L. *down stage.* LUKE *goes to door* L., *looks off, closes door, then goes up to door* C., *looks off, then closes it. Comes* R. *of* MIKE, *who is* L.C.)

LUKE. (*After waiting an instant, and making sure that no one is about.*) Try and keep some of your wits about you, Mike—if you don't mind.

MIKE. (*Sulkily.*) I don't see the darned good of this part of the trick, so I tell you.

LUKE. I'm afraid we shall have a rough time if your memory doesn't improve. I've explained to you at least half-a-dozen times that it was as a sort of trial canter that I wanted to come here. If anyone in Devon can tell who is Dick Hanningford and who isn't it will be these Rollitts. If you pass here you pass anywhere.

MIKE. Well, it's the very place I should have avoided, and for the same reason. The old woman knew Dick Hanningford as well as she knows her own son, and I'd rather avoid her.

LUKE. (R.) You're bound to meet her sooner or later. Better get it over and know the worst—or the best. (*Turns away* R. *a little.*) Sixteen years make it a little difficult to tell a man, especially between the age of nine and twenty-five, and you're like him enough, and always were.

MIKE. And suppose she gets asking questions—do I

remember this, do I remember that—you know what old women are.

LUKE. Well, you can't be expected to remember all the details of your pinafore days after all this time, and knocking about as you have been. You know all that is necessary for you to know. You knew the old man, and you were in the house, and you knew young Hanningford. Besides, you needn't recollect anything yourself. You recollect what other people recollect, that's all you're wanted to do.

MIKE. (*Rising.*) I hope we don't make a mess of it! (*Turns* L.)

LUKE. (*Crossing and laying his hand on* MIKE'S *shoulder. turns him to* C.) *We* shan't make a mess of it—don't you. You know what it's for—£100,000 apiece. I've done my share of the job—you do yours. (*Turns* R. *a little.*)

MIKE. (*Turning round and facing him.*) Are you sure you did your share?

LUKE. (L.) What do you mean? (*Turns* C.)

MIKE. (R.) Are you sure he was dead?

LUKE. (*After pausing, during which they have looked steadily at each other, turning away* L.) Well, the bullet went in above his ear, because I examined the wound: and his body went over a two hundred-foot precipice—that I could also take an affidavit to—only I'd rather not. (*Turning round and facing* MIKE *again.*) What makes you doubt it?

MIKE. I don't know—nothing. The idea occurred to me, that's all. (*Turns* L. *a little.*)

LUKE. Don't you drink so much and you won't have so many ideas. (*After a pause, during which he seems troubled, shaking it off with an effort.*) Have you got the letters with you? It will look well to take them out casually while talking. (*Crosses* R.*; sits on table.*)

MIKE. (*Who has crossed to* L., *taking them out of his breast pocket and holding them in his hand.*) Yes, here they are all right. Bah! (*With a shudder.*) I always see his face when I look on the darned things—I—

MRS. R. (*Without, loudly.*) Dick Hanningford—Dick Hanningford, my boy! (MIKE *drops suddenly in sitting posture on sofa* L. *with a cry "Ah."* LUKE *works round at back and drops down* L.)

(*Enter* MRS. R., *excitedly, followed at little distance by* ALLEN *and* DEBORAH *from* C. ALLEN *and* DEBORAH *remain up.* RACHEL *from door down* L.)

MRS. R. (*Coming down towards* MIKE.) What, Dick,

my boy, where be thee? (*Sees* MIKE *on sofa; making towards him.*) Ah, there thee be—I thought I'd know thee again though thee wur only in knickerbockers when I last saw 'ee. Tain't thy fault thy father wur a bit stingy. Come and gie us a hug, lad. Lord love us—(*she is just in font of him, begins to speak in a bewildered, hesitating manner, in tones gradually dying away to an awed whisper, as she slowly step by step backs from him.*) How—how you've grown—Dick—Dick Hanningford—what—(*stands staring at him; a strange awed silence prevails*).

DEB. (*Advancing in a terrified voice.*) Aunt.

MRS. R. (*Motioning her back with her arm, but not turning and speaking in a quick, excited, loud tone.*) Keep back, child, don't come near. (LUKE *is near* MIKE *down* C.)

ALLEN. (*Springing forward.*) Mother! What's the matter?

MRS. R. (*As before.*) The man's dead.

LUKE. (R. *stepping forward.*) Dead!

MR. P. (*Who has entered* C. *followed by* ICHABOD *and* RACHEL L. *He goes quietly up to* MIKE *and lays his hand on his heart, and bends over him earnestly, and it is a few seconds before he speaks.*) Heart disease, I suppose. (*At back of settee* L. *Gets* R.C. *of settle.*) My letter in his hand. (*Gets to back of settle.*) It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good. (*Turns and feels* MIKE'S *heart once again, then quietly turns away to* ALLEN. *Comes* C.) He stood between you and £200,000. You are now old Hanningford's heir!

ALLEN. I!

MRS. R. Allen!

LUKE. (*To corpse of* MIKE—*aside as he crosses to back.*) Curse you!

MEDIUM CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE: *Morning room in a handsome flat—a showily furnished room—rather ostentatious and loud in its decoration and appointments. Large table in bay window* R. *upper corner. Fire-place* R. *Doors at back* L.C. *and two in* L. *wing. Small tables* R. *and* L.. *Easy chairs* L. *and* R.

Breakfast is laid on large table—it is a gorgeously laid meal—silver and plate in profusion, and a great number of dishes—tea urn and coffee urn—a boiling kettle—flowers and ferns in vases and stands. One, a large wavy one, is at left edge of table close to ALLEN. *The table in short is crowded and showy to the last degree. A magnificent footman in gorgeous livery is standing behind; and* MR. PIFFIN *in solemn black waits close to* ALLEN'S *chair, a dish in his hand.* ALLEN *is discovered sitting* L. *of table, and eating his breakfast in a most melancholy fashion. He looks intensely miserable and awed. The terrible solemnity of the whole affair has depressed his spirits to their lowest ebb. He glances nervously now and then as the meal proceeds, from the footman to the valet, and vice versa, as they silently and with much ceremony walk about and wait on him. The fern by his side keeps getting in his way, tickling and irritating him, but he dare not move it. He eats in silence, and when he does speak, does so in a humble, deprecating, nervous manner. He is dressed in a loose morning costume. Music to open Act.*

PIFF. (*Standing by* ALLEN'S L. *elbow* C. PETERS R. *of table* R.) May I get you a little paté de foie gras, sir?

ALLEN. (*Looking round, and speaking in a hushed voice.*) I beg pardon?

PIFF. A little paté de foie gras, sir.

ALLEN. Patty who?

PIFF. Goose's liver, sir. I think you will like it.

ALLEN. No, thanks; I never eats liver. It don't agree with me. I will have a bit o' the bacon though.

PIFF. No, sir; it is not dressed that way, sir. I would get used to it if I were you, sir. You will so often come across it. Peters, just pass your master the paté de foie gras.

(PETERS *goes to do so.* ALLEN *who has turned again towards his breakfast is about to take up some gravy from his plate with his knife*).

PIFF. (*Checks him.*) I wouldn't lap up the gravy with my knife, sir, I don't think. It's never done now in good society, sir.

ALLEN. It—it's the best part of it, you know, I allus thinks—the gravy

PIFF. Yes, it's very tasty, sir. It's unfortunate it's so sloppy; and you see, sir, eating it in that way does not show off the figure to advantage. Peters, remove your master's plate.

(PETERS *does so, placing it a few feet beyond* ALLEN'S *left hand.* ALLEN *watches it with jealous eyes.* PETERS *then holds the paté de foie gras to* ALLEN. *He slowly runs his eye up* PETERS *with awe, and then looks at the paté de foie gras, then using one hand attempts to take it.* PETERS, *not moving a muscle, holds it tight.* ALLEN *seems surprised, and partly rising, attempts to take it with both hands.*)

PIFF. (*Coming to his rescue, cutting a piece, and putting it on his plate.*) Allow me, sir. Peters, the brown bread and butter.

PET. (*Looking for it.*) It is not on the table, sir.

PIFF. No brown bread and butter; dear me, how remiss!

(*Crosses* L. *and rings bell.* PETERS *also crosses* L.C. *door,* ALLEN *looks cautiously round and sees they are not watching him, and stealthily reaches over and secures a knifeful of gravy. He is about having a second and has the knife close to his mouth, when he becomes aware that* PIFF. *has returned and is watching him. He tries to hide the knife out of sight.* PETERS *has returned with bread and butter.*)

PIFF. (*Severely.*) Peters, remove your master's knife. Don't you see that it is in his way?

(PETERS *does so, and then holds the bread and butter to* ALLEN, *who takes a thin slice, folds it up, and holds it in his left hand while taking the paté on a fork in his right. He puts first the paté and then the bread and butter into his mouth and swallows them.*)

PIFF. I must apologize for serving you your breakfast in here, sir. Of course, you will not have it in the drawing-room as a rule.

ALLEN. No, a' coorse not. No; us allus used to have it in the kitchen at home.

PIFF. Yes, sir. Must have been very convenient. But I think I'll get you to put up with the breakfast parlour in future, sir—when the room's ready. Have you quite finished, sir?

ALLEN. (*Humbly suggesting.*) I think I'd like a little more o' that pie. (*Looking longingly at pie the other side of table.*) You see, I allus wur a hearty eater. (*Said as apology*).

PIFF. Yes, sir, I'm delighted to hear it, sir; but I wouldn't eat any more breakfast, sir. You will find it is considered correct among *bons vivants* to eat a very sparse *dejeuner.* My late lamented master, the Count de Fizziani, never partook of anything but a cup of weak tea and a little dry toast, and he was one of the oldest families in Europe.

(ALLEN *rises,* PETERS *bows as he does so, and* ALLEN *returns the bow and comes down* R.)

ALLEN. Ah, I shouldn't 'a' thought as anyone could 'a' lived long on that. (*He bows*).

PIFF. No necessity to bow, sir.

ALLEN. He did it. (*Indicating* PETERS).

PIFF. He's paid for it.

ALLEN. I allus seem to want a good feed myself in the morning. (*Takes out an old clay pipe and prepares to fill it. Goes down* R. *and sits in chair.* PETERS *is clearing away the breakfast things*).

PIFF. Are you thinking of smoking, sir?

ALLEN. Yes; I allus has a whiff or two arter breakfast.

PIFF. It's very soothing, sir. My late lamented master, the Count de Fizziani, used to follow precisely the same course. But I wouldn't smoke a pipe, sir. Pipes are going out in good society. (*Takes cigarette case from pocket and offers it to* ALLEN. *Takes pipe from* ALLEN *and puts it on corner of table* R.C.) I have some cigarettes here, sir, which I think you will like, sir. These are much more *comme il faut,* sir. This case is a present from my late lamented master, the Count.

(ALLEN *looks at them and gingerly takes one.*)

ALLEN. Which end?

PIFF. (*Lighting match.*) Either end, sir. Allow me. (*Showing matchbox.*) Another little souvenir from my late master. He was always acknowledging, if I may say

so, my value to him. That sort of thing is always done in good society now. (*Lights cigarette.*) It is a full flavored one, sir. (PIFFIN *takes* ALLEN'S *pipe from table* R.C., *crossing with it to window* R.)

ALLEN. (*Watching him, anxiously.*) Don't hurt him.

PIFF. (*Turning round.*) I was just going to put it outside on the window-sill, sir.

ALLEN. No, don't put him there. We used to sit up together of a night watching the sheep. I don't like the thought of putting him outside the window, now I'm a gentleman. Drop him in the pocket of that old shooting coat o' mine that thee won't let me wear. They know each other. (*Sits* R. *and smokes his cigarette.* PIFF. *puts the pipe on table and returns* R.C.)

PIFF. (*Noticing that* ALLEN *is looking at his cigarette.*) All right, sir? (R.)

ALLEN. Yes—yes, thank you, Mr. Puffin—

PIFF. Piffin, sir.

ALLEN. I wur looking to see if it wur alight, that's all.

PIFF. You will soon get to like them, sir. And whenever you are ready to dress, sir—

ALLEN. (*Surprised.*) Dress? Why, I be dressed, bain't I?

PIFF. Oh, only for breakfast, you see, sir. I understood you were going out walking, sir.

ALLEN. Why can't I walk in these?

PIFF. Oh, no, sir—all London would laugh at you.

ALLEN. Lord! I should never a' thought as they'd take so much notice. (*Rising.* PIFF. *crosses to* L. *near down stage door.*) Ah, well, I'll dress. (*Crossing* L.) I don't want to upset London if I can help it. I'll dress. (*Exit* L. *Bows to* PIFFIN *as* PIFFIN *does so to him*).

PIFF. No necessity to bow, sir. (*Aside.*) Ah, I've got a big job on here!

(*Exit* PIFFIN, *following* ALLEN L. PIFFIN *immediately returns, having forgotten the pipe, which he takes. He is recrossing* L. *as enter* DEXTER *and* CLARA, C., *preceded by* PETERS, *who takes tray from table* R.C. *and exits up* L.)

And I've got to live in the house with this.

(DEXTER *goes* C., CLARA R. *at back.*)

DEX. (*Coming down.*) Good-morning, Piffin, good-morning. Having a quiet whiff?

PIFF. Thank you, sir. My stomach does not permit my indulging in the luxury of a cutty pipe.

DEX. Is Mr. Rollitt about?

PIFF. He has just this minute gone upstairs to dress, sir. I will let him know you are here, sir.

DEX. No hurry—no hurry at all, Piffin. We are before our time. You are not looking well, Piffin.

PIFF. Anxiety, sir. May be anxiety. You see Mr. Rollitt's unacquaintance with the manners of the *beaux esprits* throws much responsibility on myself.

DEX. But you must be careful, Piffin. What would he do without you?

PIFF. (*Smiling.*) Well, I'm afraid he would be a little up a tree, sir, if I may be permitted a vulgarism. (*Moving to door* L.) I will go and acquaint him with your arrival, sir. (*Takes plate from table* L., *puts pipe on it.*) I'll send him to you directly, sir. (*Smells pipe.*) Shag! (*Exit* L.L.)

DEX. Thank you, Mr. Piffin, thank you. (*Turning round.*) Always be affable with your inferiors—never know when you may want 'em.

CLARA. (*By window, looking out.*) Do you come across many of that sort? (*Comes down* R. *of table* R.)

DEX. Ah, you beast—you vixen. I wonder you don't cut yourself with that tongue of yours.

CLARA. (*Turning round with a hard laugh. At fireplace* R.) It must be pretty sharp if it goes through your skin.

DEX. Ah, you damned—

(*Enter* ALLEN L. *He has on slippers and a smoking coat*).

ALLEN. (*Crossing.*) Don't 'ee look at us too closely. I bean't properly dressed yet.

CLARA. (R.C. *turns head away.*) I don't think we had better look at you at all under those circumstances, Mr. Rollitt. (*Laughs.*)

ALLEN. (*Laughs.*) Oh, I be covered up all right everywhere. I merely meant as I wasn't up to fashion plate standard. (*Crossing* C.) And how be Colonel Dexter? (*Shaking hands.*)

DEX. (L.) Jolly, my boy—and how's yourself?

ALLEN. (*C.*) Oh, I be spry enough. (*Crossing before him and shaking hands with* CLARA, *and keping her hand.*) I think us'll have a pleasant day.

CLARA. (R. *looking tenderly at him.*) I'm sure we shall. (*Crosses to sofa, stands at head of it.*)

DEX. Well, you young folks will, I know, and the old folks will be happy looking on. (*Sitting, and taking* CLARA'S *hand in his and fondling it.* ALLEN *crosses* R.) To see his little girl happy, that's always happiness enough for old Jack Dexter.

CLARA. (*Leaning over and kissing the top of his hand.*) Silly old dad.

DEX. (*Taking out his handkerchief and pretending to weep.*) Ah, like her mother—like her mother.

ALLEN. (R. C., *laughs nervously.*) Her—her mother must ha' been rare beautiful, mustn't her?

DEX. (C. *rising and taking* ALLEN *by the hand.*) Thank you,—ah, Mr. Rollitt, you have never known the blessing of a wife—(CLARA *looks at him*)—you do not understand the feelings of a widower. (*Weeping.*)

ALLEN. No—but—(*laughing*)—but—I hopes to one day; no—no—I don't mean that—I—(*confused*)—Have thee had breakfast? (CLARA *sits on the soft* L.)

DEX. Yes, thank you, Allen, my boy.

ALLEN. (*Cheerfully.*) Have another.

DEX. No thanks, not to-day.

ALLEN. What's the matter? Off thee feed?

DEX. No, my lad, but we old folks ain't like you young country ones—nothing at present thank you—(*pauses*)—to eat.

ALLEN. Have summat to drink. (CLARA *crosses* L. *Both men laugh, each in his own distinctive way.* DEX. *turns* L. *and catches* CLARA'S *face.*) There be some rare old whiskey in the library. Thee'll find it on the sideboard—(DEX. *goes up* C.)—and it be more comfortable like in there than here. I'll just go and finish making myself beautiful. (*Crosses to* L.)

CLARA. Don't be too long. (*Crossing and sitting* L.C.)

ALLEN. (*Laughing.*) No, it oughtn't to take me long to—(DEX. *has his back to them, wine business at table* R. C.)—do that, ought it? (*Goes to* L. *door down stage. Laughs, and then low to* CLARA *as he is going.*) I am not likely to stop upstairs long when I know thee's downstairs.

CLARA. Go away, go away.

(*Exit* ALLEN *down stage* L. *Bus. She kisses her hand.*)

DEX. And I suppose you will go and throw this chance away, like you have every other.

CLARA. Well, what if I do? (*Rises, crosses* R.)

DEX. What if you do? What are we to live on? (*Goes to* CLARA L.)

CLARA. Gulls, I suppose—as we always have done.

DEX. Yes, and is it pleasant living? Is it pleasant to have to slave and trick for every dinner? Is it pleasant to be kicked—sooner or later—out of every society one goes into? (*Coming close and speaking low.*) Was it pleasant to be buried for two years in that God-forsaken

hole by Exmoor, not daring to show our heads above ground for a moment? You've got a fine chance of being respectable now.

CLARA. Too late, I'm afraid, though.

DEX. (R. C.) Too late?

CLARA. Yes—you see, papa, dear, you haven't exactly brought me up in that way, and I'm afraid I'm too old to learn now. I don't think I should be quite at home as the wife of a piously brought up young man from the country. (*Leans back—laughs.*)

DEX. And so you're going to let six thousand a year slip through your fingers. It's wicked—it's wicked.

CLARA. (*Laughs—rises.*) Well, it hasn't slipped through my fingers just at present, it is sticking to them pretty freely. (*Crosses to* R.—DEX *is* C.—*toys with ring.*)

DEX. (*Goes to table* R. C.) And how long do you think he will stand you playing with him?

CLARA. Oh, a good long while yet. (*Goes up.*)

DEX. (*Puts hat on table* R. C.) That's just where you're making a mistake then. He's not a fool. He'll want an answer, "Yes," or "No," soon, and what are you going to say then?

CLARA. (*Looking out of window.*) No. (*Looking into fireplace* R.)

DEX. (*After a pause—violently.*) Luke Cranbourne's at the bottom of this. What devil's game is it that's going on between you and him? (*Loudly.*)

CLARA. I do wish you wouldn't drink when you're coming out anywhere, it always makes you so noisy. (*At glass.*)

DEX. (*Violently.*) Take care, Clara—you seem to forget I'm your father.

CLARA. (*Coldly.*) The relationship was none of my seeking. Whatever responsibility attaches to the unfortunate—(*moves near* DEX.)—occurrence is not mine.

DEX. (L. *making movement as if to strike her.*) Clara.

CLARA. (*Facing him with quiet contempt—a pause.*) Put down your hands, father. That period of my life is over. (*Crosses.* DEX. *steps back, then throws himself into chair, leans his head on his arms, and bursts into tears* R. C.)

DEX. (*Crying.*) My own child hates me.

CLARA. (*Crossing and laying a hand on his shoulder gently.*) I don't mean to be hard, father, but you can't expect much love and duty from me. Curses and blows were all you ever gave me as a child, and ever since I

became a woman you have merely hawked me about as your decoy.

DEX. (*Whimpering.*) I only want you to do what's for your own good.

CLARA. (*Turns away* L.) Yes, but you must allow me to be the judge of that—and come—you haven't had much cause to grumble up to now. You've been able to be drunk every night for the last three months.

DEX. (*Rises* C.) I ain't been drunk. (*Takes hat off table* R. C.)

CLARA. Not for you perhaps—(*goes* L. *a little*)—drunk in the ordinary sense of the word—and I will get you something to-day if I can.

DEX. (*Drying his eyes.*) God bless you, Clara, you're a good girl. Do you think you'll be able to get a twenty?

CLARA. You must leave it to me. I'll get you as much as I can.

ALLEN. (*Off* L.) Thank you, Mr. Puffin.

PIFF. (*Off* L.) Piffin, Piffin, sir.

CLARA. (*Moving away towards door—upper* L.) Come into the next room now. Here's Allen coming back.

DEX. (*As he follows her out.*) Say you want to help a poor woman who's very ill, and has been ordered nourishing food and—(*gags.*)

(*Exeunt* CLARA *and* DEX. *upper* L.)

(*Enter* ALLEN *and* PIFF. L. ALLEN *is completely dressed in the height of walking costume, and is evidently very uncomfortable. Enter* PETERS C. PET. *puts photo case on table* R. C. *Exits down* C. ALLEN *has on hat and coat, and* PIFF. *is carrying his umbrella and gloves.* ALLEN *should be got up in a slightly exaggerated masher style. He is smoking a cigarette.*)

ALLEN. I carn't breathe, Mr. Puffin.

PIFF. Oh, you will soon get used to that, sir. And would you please to remember my name is Piffin, sir? (*Taking his hand.*) Why, surely these are nines, sir, I think we could get them down to eight and a half, and if I were you, sir, I would show a little more cuff, sir, it's always done in good society, sir; besides, it makes the hand look smaller; a little cuff, sir, goes a long way in good society.

ALLEN. Thank you, Mr. Piffin. (*Shakes his hand.*)

PIFF. Thank you, sir, but I don't think you ought to shake hands with me, sir. And when you do shake hands with your friends, sir—allow me (*takes* ALLEN'S *hand*) shake high, sir. (*Shakes his hand high.*) You'll

see it's always done in good society, sir. Lord Carmichael's man told me he met you yesterday, sir.

ALLEN. I—I don't know him, do I?

PIFF. Oh, no, sir, but he knows you, sir, and he was rather complaining of your walk, sir?

ALLEN. Why, what's it got to do with him?

PIFF. Well, sir, knowing as I'm your coach, sir, he meant it as a friendly hint. You have rather a countrified walk, if you will forgive me for saying so—a more *négligé* style is adopted by the *savoir vivre* now, sir, and a more *insouciant* manner of carrying the umbrella. You walk too much in this way, sir. (*Taking up umbrella, gags. and imitates.*)

ALLEN. Lord love us, do I walk like that?

PIFF. Just like that, sir. You see yourself, sir, what a very *undestingué* appearance it presents. The present fashionable style is more like this, sir. (*Performing an exaggerated Piccadilly dawdle.*) See, sir—body a little forward—knees stiff—and a slight wobble, sir—very slight. (*Handing* ALLEN *the umbrella.*) Perhaps, sir, you would take the umbrella and try it, sir.

(ALLEN *attempts the business.*)

PIFF. (*Criticising* ALLEN*'s practice.* ALLEN *crosses to* R.) A little more bend, sir—a little wobble, sir—umbrella held lightly between the first and second fingers, sir, (ALLEN *goes* L.) and if you could manage—allow me, sir—(*takes umbrella, shows him, and returns it*) to swing it right round now and then, sir, it adds great *aplomb.*

ALLEN. Great what?

PIFF. French, sir.

ALLEN. (*Swings umbrella round awkwardly.*) Like that?

PIFF. Not quite like that, sir. A little more airily, sir.

ALLEN. (*Swinging it.*) Does it ever put anybody's eye out behind?

PIFF. I don't think that point is considered of much importance in good society, sir—that is much better, sir. (*Goes* R. ALLEN L.) If you would practice like that a little every day, sir, you would soon pick it up, sir. A little more bend, sir, and—er—don't forget the wobble.

(*Exit* L. *down stage.*)

(ALLEN *goes on practicing to himself, making as much fun as possible, consistent with comedy, out of the bus. As he is in the middle of it, enter* MRS. R. *and* DEB. *door* C., *the door being opened for them by* PETERS. *They stand*

C. *staring aghast at* ALLEN, *who continues, unconscious of their presence.*)

ALLEN. (*Gags.*) Soon pick it up! Strikes me someone'll have to pick me up. It puts me in mind of one of our old turkey cocks.

(MRS. R. *and* DEB. *come down stage a little.*)

ALLEN. (*Bus. in* R. *corner of stage.* PETERS *withdraws, grinning.*)

DEB. (*After a long pause, clapping her hands.*) I know what it is, aunt. It's our Allen.

ALLEN. (*Seeing them.*) Mother! (*Comes down* R. C. DEB. L. C.)

MRS. R. My boy! (*They rush into each other's arms* C. *and* MRS. R. *gives him a huge hug—gets* R. *of* ALLEN, DEB. L. *Then he and* DEB. *have an embrace, and then he and* MRS. R. *for the second time.*)

ALLEN. (*In the middle of* MRS. R. *second hug.*) Hold hard!

MRS. R. (*Alarmed.*) What's the matter, lad?

ALLEN. Summat's gone.

MRS. R. What?

ALLEN. I don't know; summat behind. (*Drawing back* R. *and looking down at himself.*) Mother, you've spoilt me.

MRS. R. Ah, they used to tell me I allus did that, lad. (*Laughs.*)

DEB. (*After gazing in silent admiration at* ALLEN.) Oh, aunt, isn't it lovely? Look at its hat!

MRS. R. (*Critically examining his clothes.*) Ah—and there's some good stuff there, too. (*Moving away.*)

DEB. (*Going near and sniffing.*) Oh, oh! Doesn't it smell nice—and—oh, look at its collar! (ALLEN *pleased—begins to plume himself*—DEB. *begins to laugh.*)

ALLEN. What's the matter with the collar—what are you laughing at? (*Trying to look at his own collar.* DEB.'S *laugh only grows, and* ALLEN'S *indignation begins to rise.*)

ALLEN. What's the matter—what are you laughing at? (DEB. *laughing more and more, goes to walk round him. Turning round so as to face her—his collar prevents him turning his head, and he has to walk round.*) What are you up to?

DEB. I want to see it all round.

ALLEN. (*Very indignantly.*) Well then, you can't do it. I ain't a show. What are you laughing at? There's nothing to laugh at. (MRS. R. *laughs first time.*) It's

your ignorance, because you don't understand things. What are you laughing at?

(MRS. R., *who has hitherto sat* R. *looking on, now also begins to laugh, and she and* DEB. *go on laughing more and more,* ALLEN *growing more and more indignant.*)

ALLEN. I am surprised at you, mother. Deb. allus was a—(*the two women only laugh louder, and* ALLEN *in spite of himself begins to laugh too; afterwards he joins in heartily and all three laugh, after which they have another hug. Bus.*)

MRS. R. (*Exhausted.*) Well, lad, and how dost thee like being a gentleman? (*Sits* R., DEB. *sits* L.)

ALLEN. (C. *doubtfully.*) Well, it's got its drawbacks, mother. There's more work about it than you'd think for, you know,—but I think I shall be all right, I've got a good man learning me. He wur teaching me to walk this morning. That wus the Park stroll I wur practicing when you come in; see, mother? (*Imitates stroll.*)

MRS. R. Ah, well, us made a good man of 'ee down in Devon. I hopes they don't spoil 'ee, lad, in turning thee into a gentleman.

ALLEN. Ah, no, mother. It's only a polishing up the outside. I'm old Exmoor oak—(*puts his hat and umbrella on table* R. C.)—I hope, right through, and they can't hurt that. When did 'ee come up? (*Sits* R. C.)

MRS. R. Only yesterday, and us went to Mrs. Clouter's and slept, and then us come on here this morning.

ALLEN. And how long can you stop?

MRS. R. Well, us must start off to-morrow, some time.

ALLEN. To-morrow! Oh, nonsense, mother.

MRS. R. Nonsense! Why, bless the lad, thee wouldn't have me away on Saturday. Why, who'd pay the wages, and see to everything?

ALLEN. Why, there's Rogers there, ain't there?

MRS. R. Ah, why thee might just as well leave the key of the stable in charge o' the old bay mare, as trust him to look arter anything, except his own inside.

ALLEN. (*After a pause.*) Mother! (*Rises, goes to* MRS. R. R.) What do ye want to go back at all for, and work and worry yourself to death? Let me take a little house up here in London for thee and Deb, and then we can all be together.

MRS. R. (*Aghast.*) And leave the farm?

DEB. (*Turning round.*) Oh, Allen!

ALLEN. Why not? You've worked hard enough, mother—give the farm up and enjoy yourself.

MRS. R. Enjoy myself! Away from Woodbarrow

Farm! Why, lad, thy father wur born there and brought me home there—and he died there, and thee wur born there—and there be the pigs and the poultry! (*Begins to cry.*)

ALLEN. (*Tenderly patting her.*) All right, mother, all right. Us'll keep it on.

MRS. R. (*Wiping her eyes.*) And thee might want to come back to it theeself some day, lad.

ALLEN. (*Laughing.*) Why, thee don't think I'm going to run through two hundred thousand, do ye, mother? We Devonshire lads win fortunes, not lose 'em. (*Crossing* C.)

MRS. R. Ah, no, lad. But thee knows the saying "Roses blossom for a day, But stout old ivy's green alway." Thee ain't likely to lose the money, if thee can help it, lad, but us all be in God's hands, and I'll be easier in my mind if the farm's there for thee to come home to. If anything happens, thee knows the way across the Moor, and thee knows how the latch goes, and me and the lass will be inside to welcome thee.

ALLEN. (*Goes* L. *takes* DEB.'s *hand.*) Ah, I know you will, mother, both of you.

MRS. R. (*Music—piano.*) Leastways I shall—and the lass until her gets married, I suppose. (DEB. *goes up a little; gets* R.)

ALLEN. (*Surprised.*) Until her gets married? (DEB. *goes to* MRS. R. R.; *tries to stop her speaking.*)

MRS. R. (*Sharply.*) Ah, the lads ain't all fools.

ALLEN. (*Evidently troubled.*) I never seemed to think o' Deb's getting married, somehow.

MRS. R. Well, other folks have.

ALLEN. I can't fancy the old farm wi'out Deb. Lord, how lonesome it would be.

DEB. (*Who has been trying to stop* MRS. R., *has come down and stands by her aunt,* L.) Oh, it's only aunt's fun. (*Goes to* ALLEN, L. C.) I'm not going to get married. Sure the pigs and cows are worrit enough wi' their foolish ways. I don't want any husband.

ALLEN. Ah, thee will some day, o' course, and when thee does we must make thee comfortable, lass. (*Taking her hand.*) Thee shalt ha' the best farm in all the country, and the best dairy, and the best stock.

DEB. (*Little* C.) Thank thee, Allen dear. (*Turns up stage.*)

MRS. R. (*Rising; music dies away.*) Well, lass, I suppose us had better have a clean down and summat to eat, and then see about our bit o' shopping.

ALLEN. Lord help us! (*Starting.*) If I ain't forgot all about 'em.

MRS. R. All about whom?

ALLEN. Why, Clara—Miss Dexter and her father—they be in the library waiting for me.

DEB. Oh, don't let us keep you from them. (*A little spitefully.*)

ALLEN. Oh, I shan't go out this morning, now. (*Gets hat and umbrella from table* R. C.) I shall get them to stop here instead, and us can have a nice quiet day all together. (*Going towards door, lower* L.) Come on, mother. (*Crosses to* C.) I've got a room fitted up a'purpose for thee and Deb, with a roost just outside the window with a cock and three hens in it, and he crows all night.

(*Exeunt* ALLEN, DEB., *and* MRS. R. *down stage.*)

(*Enter* BARON VON SCHORR (1) *and the* HON. TOM. GUSSETT (2), *ushered in by* PETERS C. (3). *Enter* LUKE C., *and* DEXTER U. L. (4), *afterwards* CLARA (5.) BARON *goes down* L., GUSSETT R., LUKE R. C., DEXTER L. C.)

DEX. (L.) Rollitt's going out. You can't see him. It's no good your coming here to try and fleece him this morning. I tell you he's going out.

LUKE. (*Coming down* R. C.) Ah, we'll wait and say good-bye to him, Jack.

BARON. (L. C.) Ah, greedy Jack,—greedy Jack—you want de bird all to yourself. Nein—nein, zhare and zhare alike. Herr Cranbourne have a ving, Tom Gussett, he have de oder ving. You and your fair daughter have de legs, and I vill have de breast.

CLARA. No, you shall have the bones after we've done with them. Make 'em into a stew—keep a German baron for a week. (*Others laugh.*)

BARON. Ah, Trickey, you here. (*Motioning towards* CLARA *and her father.*) Ah, de early birds—de early birds.

CLARA. Yes, we have to be. (*Rises, and goes* R. *imitating him.*) De worms get up so early nowadays. (*Enter* ALLEN *lower* L. BARON *goes to meet him.* GUSS. *puts him away and he turns up* C. *Speaks to* DEX.)

ALLEN. Hullo! Unexpected pleasure!

(LUKE *comes forward and greets* ALLEN C.)

GUSS. (R.) Haven't seen you for an age, dear boy.

ALLEN. No. (*Goes to* LUKE R.) I've been keeping pretty respectable of late—I—I mean, you know, I haven't been going out much.

LUKE. (L.) Tom and I are going over to Paris for

the Vincennes meeting, and we've come to see if you will join.

GUSS. (L. *of* ALLEN R.) Yes, do come; then we can show you about Paris a bit, you know.

LUKE. Ah, yes, and we shall be able to get you into one or two things in the betting line if you are with us. We can introduce you to some friends of ours.

ALLEN. Ah, it be very kind of thee, I'm sure.

(*They go on talking* R.)

BARON. (*Aside to the* DEXTERS, *back of* CLARA.) I say, Jack, my boy, how long have you been Colonel? I did not know you vas a militaire.

CLARA. Papa joined the Salvation Army about the same time that you were raised to the German Peerage. Don't talk so loud, my dear Baron.

BARON. Gut, gut.

(LUKE *sits down stage* R. *with back to audience, looking at betting book.*)

GUSS. (*To* ALLEN R.) Of course we shall take care of your interests as if it was for ourselves.

BARON. (*Comes and puts arm in* ALLEN'S.) Of course they vill take care ob your interests for themselves. Come here. (*Goes* L.) You know I have been tinking about you so much ob late. Ja!

ALLEN. Ah, very kind of thee, I'm sure.

BARON. (L.) Ja, I say to myself, my fren Rollitt—I always call you my fren—my fren Rollitt, I say, he is a gut fellow—he has money—all he vants is family. (GUSS. *goes to* DEX. L. C.) He must marry family. (DEX. *goes* C. *and tries to hear conversation*—BARON *notices it and crosses to* R. *with* ALLEN.) Now, Miss Dexter, she is a nice girl—ach, such a nice girl—but she has no family.

ALLEN. No—not yet. (LUKE *gets near fireplace* R.)

BARON. (R. *Seeing it after a while.*) Ah, nein, nein—I do not mean vat you mean—I mean family de oder vay—backvards—dead uns.

ALLEN. Oh!

BARON. Ja. Now, dere is my niece, look at her family! Look at her ancestors—all barons—German barons! And she is such a nice girl—so beaudiful—so plump—ach, I will indroduce her to you. She vill mash you—so much. She—

(*Enter* MRS. R., DEB. *behind her, lower* L. *door. Seeing the room full she stands by door hesitatingly.*)

GUSS. (*Coming down and interrupting, with a sneer-*

ing laugh.) Your nurse, Rollitt, I think. (*Comes* C. LUKE *goes to fireplace* R.)

ALLEN. (*Turns and sees them, and then goes towards them.*) Yes, Mr. Gussett—the best nurse a man can have—my mother.

(GUSS. *confused, but soon recovers himself and laughs it off.* COL. D., LUKE, *and* CLARA *come forward to greet* MRS. R. *and* DEB. L. C., *and the customary ceremony, etc., is gone through—all speaking together.*)

CLARA. (*Smiling pleasantly, shakes hands with* MRS. R.) Good-morning, Mrs. Rollitt. You are looking so well and jolly. How are you, my dear? (*To* DEB. *Between these two the greeting is really strained and awkward, although outwardly pleasant enough.* CLARA *kisses* DEB., *but* DEB. *seems to shrink—she turns away.* CLARA *notices this, and follows* DEB. *as she turns away up* C., *with a meaning look. While it has been going on the greeting between* MRS. R. *and* LUKE *has taken place—* MRS. R. *down* L.)

ALLEN. (*Finishing his introduction of* MRS. R. and BARON.) The Baron von Schnorr—Mrs. Rollitt, my mother.

BARON. Your mudder—Oh, impossible. (*Goes* L. C.)

MRS. R. (*Huffy.*) I beg your pardon, Mr. Snort.

BARON. Ach, ja, you are laughing at me—not your mudder.

(CLARA *walks round at back, drops down* R. *near* LUKE.)

MRS. R. (*Very indignant.*) Yes—his mother. Don't you cast any of your nasty foreign insinuations upon me. I'm his lawful married mother, and his father was his father, and a better man never lived, as anyone in Exmoor—

ALLEN. (*Soothing her.*) It's all right, mother, the Baron only means it complimentary. Thee'st supposed to look too young to be anybody's mother. He has to take (CLARA *sits* R.) thee for my sister. (*Laughing—goes up* L. C. *with* DEX.)

BARON. Ja—I take you for his sister. Ach, you English ladies, you never seem to get more old—you only get more round, more—more jolly.

MRS. R. (*Still indignant.*) Ah—foolishness. (*Ruffling her dress and sitting very stiff* L. *on sofa.*)

BARON. (*Sitting on sofa beside her.*) It must be de climate keep you so moist. (*Drawing closer.*) I knew a man, he lives in your Manchester, and—(*goes on talking to* MRS. R. *but is not heard.*)

(ALLEN *goes up and joins* COL. DEX. *up* L. C. *and* CLARA. *After a little while* COL. DEX. *appropriates him, leaving* CLARA *a little to* R. *of them unnoticed.* GUSS. *continues talking to* DEB. DEB. *evidently bored and anxious to get away.* GUSS. *trying to be very agreeable. At this point when all the others are occupied,* LUKE R. *beckons* CLARA *to him and she crosses. Their conversation is in eager undertone and they watch to see that no one is noticing them.*)

LUKE. Have you got him to join yet?

CLARA. No—he kicks against it.

LUKE. If his name isn't down in the list of directors before Monday I shall be arrested.

CLARA. Can't you get away?

LUKE. No, I'm watched night and day. If he joins, the company will float and it will be all right.

CLARA. I shall be seeing him alone this morning. I will try again.

LUKE. And keep to plain gold and diamonds for presents. Those fallal things (*touching her bracelet*) are no good. Don't fetch ten per cent. of their value.

DEB. (*Part of the conversation between herself and* GUSS. *Abstractedly, her attention being fixed on* LUKE *and* CLARA.) Ha, ha! that was very funny.

(GUSS. R. *with* DEB. *looks at her in amazement.*)

LUKE. (*Down* R.) There's that milkmaid watching us —don't look around, answer as though I had been proposing to you—that will account for our talking together. (*In a louder but still undertone.*) Is there no hope for me?

CLARA. (*Down* R.—*smiling.*) None, Luke—please don't refer to the subject again. I like you—respect you —will be a sister to you—but love—

LUKE. (*Grinning.*) Yes, it's that Rollitt that you love. (DEB., *followed by* GUSS., *has moved away to window.*)

CLARA. Mr. Cranbourne, you have no right—

LUKE. (*Who has been watching* DEB. Chuck it up, it's all right, she's gone to the window.

CLARA. I don't suppose we've deceived her very much, she's a sharp little minx. Get these men away.

(CLARA *takes up book, and standing, toys with it up* R. *front of* R. C. *table.*)

BARON. (*Finishing.*) She never leave her bed for eighteen years—she take dree dozes—den she get up and go for a dree mile walk.

MRS. R. (*Rising.*) Lor! It must have been quite a change for her.

BARON. (Rising.) Ja. It vas a miragle. (*Turning and seeing* LUKE *beside him.*) Ha, my dear boy, ready?

LUKE. (*Crosses to* BARON.) Ready and off.

ALLEN. (*Coming down* C. *followed by* DEX.) Oh, are you three going?

(BARON *goes* C.)

LUKE. Yes, I know you'll be glad to be rid of us. (*Laughing.*)

ALLEN. Well, I have (*looking at watch*) one or two little things to do this morning.

(BARON *goes up* C.)

DEX. Well, look here, Allen, I'm just going to have a quiet weed in the smoking room till you're ready. See?

ALLEN. Oh, it be a billiard room now, thee know.

LUKE. Oh. have you had a table put up?

CLARA. (*Who has just crossed over and joined the group* L. *to* MRS. R. *who is just about quitting the room by door* L. *lower.*) Do you allow your little boy to play billiards, Mrs. Rollitt? I don't think I should if I had charge of him. (*Playfully.*)

MRS. R. Oh, the more he's up to every sort o' game that's played the better for him, to my thinking.

(*Exit* MRS. R. L.)

ALLEN. (*Laughing.*) Oh, it keeps me at home out of mischief, like. (*Moves to upper door* L.) Come and have a look at it. (*Goes up* C.)

BARON. (*As they go.*) Ach, billiards iz a beaudiful game. (*Aside to* LUKE.) But you cannot vin much at id, id take so dam long.

(*Exeunt all but* GUSS. *and* DEB. [L.]—*all talking as they go.* GUSS. *and* DEB. *near fireplace.*)

DEB. (R.) Well, I'm afraid, Mr. Gussett, I must really go now. (*Goes down stage.* GUSS. *goes* L. C. *and stops her.*)

GUSS. (*Getting between her and the door* L. *to which she is backing.*) Oh, no, don't go. Do you know, I shall really think you are trying to avoid me.

DEB. (*Retreating behind table*—GUSS. *takes a step.*) Oh, not at all.

GUSS. (C. *gets* L. *of* R. C. *table.*) Ah, so pleasant to hear you say so. You know, Miss Deacon, I so want you to like me.

DEB. Yes, well—I do very much, only I can't stop to do it now, because you see aunt wants me. (*Moves* C. *up stage.* GUSS. *stops her. Bus. of* DEB. *trying to get*

away and of Guss. *cutting her off and trying to get near her; is kept up throughout the scene.*)

Guss. Ah, but your aunt sees so much of you and I can see so little.

Deb. (*Laughing, walks* L. C. *up stage.* Guss. *at head of sofa.*) I'm afraid there's not very much more of me to see. I must go really, because we have got to do some shopping this morning.

Guss. Ah, let me come with you?

Deb. Oh, no, I won't tax your kindness. I know you men hate shopping, and we are going into drapers' and dressmakers' and all sorts of dreadful places. (C.)

Guss. Ah, they will not be dreadful if you are there, Miss Deacon.

Deb. And aunt always takes such a long time shopping. (*Goes up* C.) Never can make up her mind, and I'm worse still, and—(*makes movement,* Guss. *moves behind settle and stops her down* L.)

Guss. Ah, the longer you take, the better I shall like it. I shall enjoy coming, I assure you.

Deb. (*Getting more and more cross, comes* R. C.) Well you know I really don't think you will; and really, Mr. Gussett—(*turns* R. *a little.*)

Guss. (*Interrupting.*) Ah, I know better. No, I quite insist upon coming.

Deb. (*With calm, suppressed temper.*) Ah, all right, Mr. Gussett, you shall. (*Crossing* L. *meets* Mrs. R. *just entering* L.) Aunt, I want you. (*Turning her round again.*)

Mrs. R. (L.) Why, whatever's the—

Deb. I'll tell you, come along.

(*Exeunt* Mrs. R. *and* Deb. L.)

Guss. (R. *turns and arranges his moustache in glass over chimney*). Might do worse, Gussy, my boy. (*Turns round again.*) She's not a bad little thing, lick her into shape a bit.

(*Enter* Luke, *upper* L.)

Luke. (*Crossing to table and taking up his hat.*) Coming?

Guss. No, dear boy. (*Laughing.*) Got a little job on.

Luke. Oh, on the war-path?

Guss. Yes—well, I may as well keep it in hand—Chawbacon will make her good for a thousand or two, I expect—if nothing better turns up.

Luke. Ah—wish you luck—she'll be a good match for you, I think, Gussy.

(*Exit* Luke C.)

(*Enter* MRS. R. *and* DEB. *lower door* L. *Both are wearing old-fashioned big country shawls, and big bonnets.* DEB. *evidently has on one of her aunt's. Their dress altogether is as extravagant as comedy will permit, and has evidently been hastily put on.* DEB. *also carries a big country hand-basket covered with a cloth, the neck of a bottle sticking prominently out, and a huge gamp.* DEB. *smothering her laughter*).

DEB. (*Crossing* R.C.) We are quite ready, Mr. Gussett.

MRS. R. Yes, we are quite ready.

GUSS. (*Who has regarded them with a horrified stare.*) Ah, yes, if you will wait a minute I think I will call a cab.

DEB. Oh, we'd rather walk, thank you—you would rather walk, wouldn't you, aunt?

MRS. R. Oh, I've made up my mind for a walk.

DEB. Yes, we would both rather walk. Will you give your arm to aunty, Mr. Gussett? (GUSS. *crosses to* C.) And be very careful of her at the crossings, because she's rather nervous, and so am I.

DEB. (R.C. *handing the basket to* GUSS.) You won't mind carrying the basket, will you, Mr. Gussett, because it's so heavy? (*He takes it bewildered and helpless.*)

(*As* GUSS., DEB. *and* MRS. R. *reach door* C., *enter* ALLEN *and* CLARA L. *upper* E.)

ALLEN. Hulloa! Where be thee off to?

DEB. Down Regent street, and up—Piccadilly, I think you call it. Good-bye.

(*Exeunt* MRS. R., DEB. *and* GUSS. C.)

CLARA. (*Comes* L. *laughing.*) I should like to be there to see the Hon. Tom Gussett at the crossings.

ALLEN. (*Half amused, half cross.*) Ah, her be a madcap, her be, that girl. What makes thee so anxious that I should join the company?

CLARA. (*Sitting* L. *on sofa,* ALLEN *stands by her, behind sofa, leaning over.*) Why, don't you see, poor papa could be secretary if you joined. They would let you nominate him, and we should be so glad to be earning something—(*very low*)—and we are so poor. (*Laying her hand on him.*) Do join, Allen, for my sake.

ALLEN. (*Yielding—back of sofa.*) Ah, thee don't know how hard thee makes it for me to say no.

CLARA. Then don't say it—it would make me so happy. (*Looking up at him.*)

ALLEN. It would?

CLARA. (*Laying her hand as if unwittingly on his.*)

And I should think you—(*drooping her head.*) Ah! I'd better not say what I should think you.

ALLEN. Ah, well, lass, if you wish it, I will then.

CLARA. You will really?

ALLEN. Yes—if it will make thee happy I will. And now let's talk about yourself. (*Sits* L. *next to* CLARA.) Thee is the company I most wants to join. How have thee been getting on?

CLARA. (*Looking down.*) Oh, dear!

ALLEN. What does "Oh dear" mean?

CLARA. "Oh, dear" means very bad. Debts. (*With assumed bewilderment.*) Awful!

ALLEN. (*Smiling.*) What sort of debts?

CLARA. Oh, all sorts—tradespeople, you know, and all that, and then I thought I could win a little by betting—(ALLEN *rises*)—and put it all right—and I've been and lost. Oh dear!

ALLEN. (*Vexed, goes* C.) I should ha' thought there wur enough fools among us men trying to win money that way.

CLARA. I am naughty, I know—but papa leaves everything to me, and I get so frightened when I see the debts mounting up and nothing to meet them, and I've no one to advise me. (*Crosses* L.)

ALLEN. (*After a pause, rises, goes to* CLARA—*kindly.*) I didn't mean to speak unkind, lass. I'm full of old-fashioned notions about women, I suppose. I like 'em to be women—not mere men in petticoats. How much does thee owe?

CLARA. Oh, heaps! (*Handing him pocket-book.*) Look. (ALLEN *crosses to* R. *and sits at table.*) And I haven't any money. (*Rising and looking over his shoulder* R., *as he examines the book.*) Do you think they'll put me in prison?

ALLEN. (*Turns—laughing.*) Thee ought to be taken in charge by somebody, that's certain. (ALLEN *rises, puts some notes from his pocket-book into hers, and hands it back to her.*) I owe your father a little over one or two bets. I can take it off that and give him the rest, like. (*Crosses to* L.)

CLARA. (*Takes book and lays it on the table—the notes drop out on to the table.*) You are good, Allen, really. (*Puts book on table* R.—*half to herself.*) I wish sometimes that you weren't—that you were more like other men I have met. (*Turning away* R.)

ALLEN. Why, would thee like me better?

CLARA. No, but I should like myself better.

ALLEN. What do thee mean, lass?

CLARA. Nothing. I'm not used to your sort of men. (*Goes to fireplace, then up* R., *throwing off her seriousness and turning towards him.*) You are like the knight, Allen, out of some old legend that comes and slays the dragon and sets the frightened princess free from all her trouble. (*Laughing.*)

ALLEN. (*Goes to table* R. CLARA R.C. *at top of table.*) When art thee going to gie me the right to be thy knight always?

CLARA. (*Sits at table playfully.*) Ah, the gallant knights are apt to turn into grim jailers—(*comes* L. *of* R. *table*)—when they get the princess into their own castles.

ALLEN. Can't thee believe me, Clara? Trust me, lass—I'm only a rough country chap to be asking a beautiful lady like thee to be my wife. But if I can't gie thee anything very showy on the outside, it will make me the more eager allus to keep a loving heart for thee within.

CLARA. Oh, no. (*Sits in chair* L. *of table.*) A lover on his knees is so much nicer than a lover on your arm. You are so nice, Allen, as you are, you can't think. I really couldn't bring myself to risk a change.

ALLEN. (C.) It would be a change for thee, Clara—(*leans on table at back of* CLARA, *puts hand on* CLARA'S *chair*)—from a rough and troubled road to one where every stone wur smoothed away from your path—where every thorn wur held back as you passed—where, instead of care for the day and dread for the morrow, thee would feel that a strong arm wur round thee—that a loving hand wur working out thy life for thee. Cannot thee risk the change, Clara?

CLARA. (*Rises,* ALLEN *takes her right hand, turns away* R.) Ah, I suppose there are such lives for some women. It must be very good when you are tired. (*Facing round to* L.C.) And you, Allen—women do not always seem so charming after marriage as they did before. It might be a risk for you.

ALLEN. To have the sweetest, noblest woman in the world to be my wife? I'll risk that. (*Laughs, comes* C.)

CLARA. (*Turning away again to* R., ALLEN L.C.) Ah, you boys, you think all women are angels.

ALLEN. So they are—a good woman is an angel.

CLARA. (*At fire, facing round and looking at him.*) How do you know I am good? (*Very low and serious.* ALLEN *drops down* C. *A pause. He looks in surprise and inquiry at her, not knowing what to answer.*)

CLARA. Hadn't you better make sure, Allen? (*Laugh-*

ing.) What do you know of my past—of even my present —of whence I came—what I am? (*Laughs.*) Suppose, Allen, suppose I were only an adventuress. (*Takes a step.*) A woman with the blood of sharpers and thieves in her veins—whose nursery was the gambling house—whose school was the Café and the Boulevards—a woman who earned her daily bread by shamelessness and cunning —a woman whose past would ever follow like a shadow the footsteps of her life—whose future must ever be a darker shadow still. Ah, Allen, take care. Cupid ties a bandage over men's eyes. Hymen, when it is too late, plucks it off. Hadn't you better lift a corner of the handkerchief, Allen, while we are yet upon the step without, lest beside your hearth, when the door has shut us in, you cast it loose, to find I am a stain upon your name—a shadow in your home—a blight upon your life? (*Laughing.*) Allen, take care—take care. (*Crosses to* L. ALLEN *moves up a trifle.*)

ALLEN. (*Recovering from the bewilderment with which he has heard her.*) Ah, it's well for thee that it is thee, and not anyone else that talks like this about 'ee.

CLARA. Ah, but Allen, try and find out a little more about me; it's just a whim of mine—I want to feel sure that you know me—just to please me.

ALLEN. If I couldn't trust thee—(*takes her hand*)—lass, I shouldn't love thee.

CLARA. (*Crosses to* R.C. ALLEN *follows.*) Ah, you are a dear good fellow, Allen, and I won't tease you any more. And you will join the company, won't you? And then you shall get me that dear little diamond bracelet that we looked at—do you remember it?—and you shall put it on yourself. (ALLEN *by her side* R. *All this is said with every trick of fascination at her command, and now she playfully holds up her arm, from which the loose sleeve falls back, close to his face.*) On that. (*He drops on his knees and kisses her arm*).

(*Enter* DEB. C.)

CLARA. (*Snatches her arm away.*) Deborah! (ALLEN *rises.*)

ALLEN. (*Turning and seeing her, goes to fireplace* R.) Hullo, thee's back soon.

DEB. Yes, aunt met Mrs. Clouter just outside, so I pleaded a headache and left them. (*Throwing off bonnet and shawl on chair and coming down.*) Don't you think Col. Dexter would like a game of billiards, Allen?

ALLEN. No, he's all right—he's smoking. (*Crosses* L.)

DEB. Oh, I'm sure he'd like a game (CLARA *motions*

ALLEN *away*), and I want to have a chat with Miss Dexter. We shan't see each other after this morning for goodness knows how long.

ALLEN. (*Moving away* L.) Ah, I understand now. (*Goes up stage* L.) I'll go, and you can tell each other about your new frocks.

(*Exit* ALLEN L., CLARA *goes* C., DEB. L.C. *and* CLARA *look at each other.*)

DEB. (*After a pause.*) I came back to see you, Miss Dexter, before you left.

CLARA. (*Coldly.*) It was very good of you.

DEB. I want to know whether you are playing the fool with Allen, or whether you mean to marry him.

CLARA. I have heard of that sort of question being put to a gentleman under certain circumstances. (*Crosses to* L.)

DEB. It is put to the person who is supposed to be acting dishonorably—I put it to you.

CLARA. I am afraid I have been mixing things up. I was under the impression that it was the stout lady, your aunt, that was Mr. Rollitt's mother.

DEB. You are very smart, Miss Dexter, and I am not, but this is no game—it is earnest.

CLARA. Then I would suggest to you that your cousin is quite capable of taking care of himself.

DEB. Yes, against a man; but not against the woman he loves and trusts. It is his love that enables you to deceive him.

CLARA. (*Crossing to* R.—*sits on chair near table* R.) You seem to have made up your mind, my dear child, that I am deceiving him.

DEB. (L.C.) I know that he has asked you to become his wife, and I know that although you have let him think it is all right, you have never given him a real answer. I know that you accept his attentions, his invitations, his presents. (*Noticing the book and notes on the table, points to them.*) And all the while you are having whispered interviews and secret meetings with another man.

CLARA. (*Coolly counting notes.*) If you are thinking of the conversation you were trying to listen to just now—

DEB. That is only the latest of many such I have noticed. They began three months ago, down in Devonshire. I come to London and find the same thing going on.

CLARA. (*Sneering.*) You really ought to have been a detective, the force might have been some use then.

DEB. I'm not blind. (*Goes* C.) Allen is. But that is

not all. These things might be explained by themselves—suspicious though they are—but just now, going downstairs, I picked up a purse. (*Pausing and looking at* CLARA, *who, however, makes no sign.*) It is your purse. (*Throws it into* CLARA'S *lap.*) I opened it to see whom it belonged to—and inside it is a wedding ring. Is your name Dexter or Cranbourne?

CLARA. (*Rising.*) I really must decline to answer any questions of yours. You are so exceedingly rude. (*Crosses up behind table* R.C.)

DEB. You need not answer me. Answer Allen. Tell him that you will be his wife—or that you cannot. (CLARA *takes no notice.*) Do you refuse? (*Crossing* L.)

CLARA. I refuse to be dictated to.

DEB. Then I shall communicate my suspicions to Allen.

CLARA. (*Turning fiercely.*) Do so. Tell him—(*walks round table to back of* DEB. C.)—that you believe that I am the wife of another man, and am playing a shameful part with him merely to sponge on him. That I am fondling him with the one hand only the better to pick his pocket with the other. Tell him that you believe he is surrounded by a gang of adventurers and thieves, of which I am the willing decoy. Tell him your suspicions, and I will tell him that they are the poisonous concoctions of a jealous woman—of a woman who loves him herself—(*laughs*)—and seeks to win him from her more favored rival, by lies and trickery. (*Goes down* R.)

DEB. (*Quietly.*) You shall answer him for all that, or he shall know the reason why you dare not. (*Crosses* L., *and calls.*) Allen! Allen!

(*Enter* ALLEN L. *up stage*).

DEB. (L. C.) Allen, is Miss Dexter engaged to be married to you or not?

ALLEN. (L.) Well. (*Laughs.*) Blest if I could tell 'ee that, Deb. That be the very thing I ha' been trying to find out myself. Bain't it, Clara? Only her be such a tease. (*All said laughingly.*)

DEB. (*Sharply.*) You mean you have never been able to get a plain answer, yes or no?

ALLEN. Gently, lass. Thee be mistaking this for some business of thine.

DEB. Allen, we've been like brother and sister all our lives, and your happiness is my happiness. I have my reasons—very strong reasons—for asking you to ask Miss Dexter now, before me, whether she will be your wife.

ALLEN. I can't say I thank thee, Deb, for interfering in a matter that don't concern thee. (*To* CLARA, *crossing to*

her.) I hope, Clara, you don't think as I have any hand in this, but as things stand now, it will perhaps be best (*advancing*) if I do ask thee. Will thee be my wife?

CLARA. (*Crosses down. Very quietly and deliberately.*) Yes! (*Stepping forward and putting her hand in* ALLEN'S, C. *A pause. She then, glacing first at* DEB., *draws* ALLEN *slowly to her, and they kiss. They cross* R.)

ALLEN. I think now, Deb, that Miss Dexter has a right to know thy "reasons."

DEB. They were mistaken ones, Allen. Please forgive me, both of you.

(*Exit* DEB. L.)

ALLEN. (*Bewildered—looks after* DEB.) What does it all mean?

CLARA. I will tell you some time. Never mind now.

ALLEN. Ah, well, us oughtn't to be angry with her, anyhow, for what her's done. (*Takes* CLARA'*s hand in his.*) Ought us? (*Draws her to him and kisses her forehead*).

CLARA. (*Disengaging herself gently.*) I am going to tell papa. I am so happy. (*Crosses* L., *looking back to him laughingly.*)

(*Exit* CLARA L. *up stage*).

ALLEN. (C. *after a pause.*) Everything I want in the whole wide world, and three months ago— (*Breaks off and pauses his hand over his eyes.*) I wonder if I shall wake up in a minute in the old farm and find that the £200,000 and Clara ha' only been dreams. (*Rousing himself.*) Ah, no, it be real enough. (*Looks round.*) Ah, they call Fortune a fickle jade, but her's been a firm friend to me. I'll drink thee a bumper, Fortune lass. (*Turns to table* R., *on which are wine and glasses, and pours out a glassful.*) I don't know how much a bumper is, but I expects it's about a glassful, and thee shall ha' it. (*Takes glass in his right hand, and raises it.*) Here's thy jolly good health, my lass. To Lady Fortune!

(*Enter* PETERS C. *upper door, with card on salver.*)

ALLEN. (*Lowers glass untouched.*) What's the matter?

PETERS. (*Coming forward and presenting salver.*) A gentleman to see you, sir.

ALLEN. (*Takes card, but does not look at it.*) He'll have to be quick about it then. Send un up. (*Footman seems to hesitate. Sharply.*) Send un up. Send un up.

(*Exit* PETERS C.)

Another of my swell friends, I suppose; they seem to be swarming this—(R. C. *glances at card, his hand holding the*

glass sinks lower and lower, he gazes round bewilderingly.)

(*Enter* RICHARD HANNINGFORD C.)

(*reads card in amazed tone.*) Richard Hanningford, I saw him lying dead before my own eyes three months ago!

HANN. (*At door, raising hat.*) I beg your pardon!

(*The glass in* ALLEN'S *hand overturns*).

MEDIUM CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE I. *The library at* ALLEN'S *Chambers. Fire* L. *Doors* R. *and* C. *Table* L.C. *Big easy chair* L. *by fire.* PETERS *discovered* L. C. *arranging and cutting papers on table and whistling.*

(*Enter* PIFFIN R. *Music to open.*)

PIFF. Have you seen my cub about?

PETERS. (*Without looking up.*) No, Foxey, I ain't. Didn't know as you had had one.

PIFF. (C.) You know who I mean—your master.

PETERS. (*Going to door* C.) Not far off from where yours is I suppose.

(*Exit* PETERS C.)

PIFF. Um! The master has been getting impertinent to me of late, so the servants seem to be following suit. (*Shrugging his shoulders.*) I shall throw this job up when I've made another hundred or two. I wonder how much longer he's going to keep me waiting.

(*Exit* PIFF. C.)

(*Enter* ALLEN R. *creeping in cautiously in a mysterious and watchful manner. He has a huge pewter pot in one hand and a large church-warden clay pipe alight in the other. He looks round stealthily, listens, then crosses nervously and sits* L. *in easy chair. He stretches himself out as luxuriously as his tight clothes will allow—especially the collar. Takes a long pull at the pot and long puffs at the pipe. In the middle of each pull, grunts "good" in evident enjoyment.*)

ALLEN. (*Chuckling in a deep undertone. Crosses to* C. *and sits.*) Ah-h-h, I've done un this time. He's waiting upstairs to curl my hair. (*Chuckling again.*) Told un I'd come up when (*grandly*) I'd finished conducting my correspondence. (*Chuckles, pulls at pipe, and takes a deep draught.*) First time I've ever enjoyed myself since

I came into my property. (*Breaks out into some country ale-house sort of song, sings, warming as he goes on with great gusto. Near the end*

(*Enter* PIFFIN C., *unseen by* ALLEN. PIFF. *comes down and stands* C. *looking on.* ALLEN *finishes song and then buries his face in the pot. As his eyes emerge over the brim he catches sight of* PIFF. *He remains looking at him for a while and then slowly puts the pot on the table.*)

ALLEN. What do thee want? Didn't I tell 'ee I wur going to conduct my correspondence, and that I didn't want to be disturbed?

PIFF. (*Goes up table.*) I beg pardon, sir, but I thought maybe you had completed your correspondence, especially as there was only one letter this morning, and that was a circular about coals.

ALLEN. Oh, did you. Well, I ain't you see. I'm going to write a lot of original correspondence this morning, and I'm collecting my thoughts. (*Goes on smoking sulkily.*)

PIFF. Yes, sir—certainly, sir—but might I be allowed to suggest, sir, that a pot of ale and a clay pipe are hardly the *dolce far niente* of a *grand seigneur.*

ALLEN. Hardly the what of my which? Look here, don't you be so spry at calling me them jaw-breaking foreign names, because I don't like it. It wur only yesterday you alluded to me as a *bo-mo,* and last week you said I ought to be in the *hot tongs.* I didn't say anything at the time, but you drop it.

PIFF. I referred to you as belonging to the *beau monde,* sir, and I may have said your position was now among the *haut ton.* We always talk like that in good society, sir. Both expressions were flattering, very flattering.

ALLEN. Ah, maybe they wur and maybe they wurn't. Next time, you call it me in English, and then I can judge for myself. And don't worrit me to-day at all. I've got a trying morning before me, and I'm going to have a little quiet enjoyment to set myself up before it begins.

PIFF. Might I suggest, then, sir, that a cigarette and a little absinthe would be more *de rigueur?* My late lamented master the Count de Fizziani invariably took a little absinthe after breakfast and found great benefit from it.

ALLEN. Yes, I know. I tried your friend's cough mixture before, you know. Old ale's good enough for me.

PIFF. But, sir—

ALLEN. Don't you worrit. I've been a gentleman for a month; I think I might have a morning off.

PIFF. Very well, sir. Just as you please, of course, sir;

but I've my character to consider, sir—and—and—I am not accustomed to the service of gentlemen with pot-house proclivities.

ALLEN. (*Sotto voce.*) Oh, go and hang yourself.

PIFF. (*Up* C.) That's never done now, sir, in good society. My late lamented master, the Count de Fizziani—

ALLEN. (*Springing up, working* PIFF. *round, from table* L. *to desk* R.) Oh, you go to your late lamented master, the fizzing Count, and tell him to—I have had eno' of him and I've had eno' of you. Blest if I've had a happy moment since you came into the house. You've dressed me up like a tailor's dummy, and curled my hair like a Sunday school kid; you've made me talk like a man in a play, and walk like a monkey on stilts. Thee've chivied me about from morning till night, and thee've rammed that old lamented corpse of yours down my throat every two minutes of the day. I've put up wi' it all for a long while because I thought thee meant well, and wur a-trying to make me into a gentleman, but blest if I think thee knows much more about the genuine article than I does, and I'm going to go it in my own way now. Look here. (*Takes off his tie and collar and throws them down and jumps on them, pulls off his coat and throws it in a corner, ruffles his hair, unbuttons and throws back his waistcoat, kicks off his boots, and throws himself into easy chair, sticks his feet on table, takes long pull from the pot, slams it on table again, and commences to smoke his pipe vigorously, looking defiantly at* PIFF.) That's the sort o' man I'm going to be now. (*Sits* L.)

PIFF. (*Who has stood aghast, moving off.*) Very well, sir; then I have only to say that I wash my hands of you entirely. (*Pause.*) You can't make a gentleman out of a pig's ear. (*Sneeringly*).

ALLEN. (*Puffing quietly at pipe.*) No, it ain't the usual method.

PIFF. (*By door* C. *muttering to himself, but meant to be heard by* ALLEN.) Only what I might have expected from mixing myself up with such canaille. (*Pauses.* ALLEN *takes no notice.*) Pray understand, sir, I give you a week's warning on the spot. My late master, the—

ALLEN. (*Springing up and throwing book at him.* PIFF. *exits* R.) Yes. (PIFF. *again appears hurriedly at door* R. *and cries,* "Upstart bumpkin," *and exit quickly.*) I'll give 'ee my toe on the spot if I hear any more of—(*reseats himself, with a grunt of disgust; a pause, during which he smokes.*) He is right, I wurn't meant for a gentleman after all. Some of us was built for gaiters, and some on us for patent leather shoes, and I be one of the gaiter sort

—all my tastes are low. I doan't like claret and I doan't like cigarettes. I'm uncomfortable in a collar (*picking his up and fixing it*) and I prefer shove-ha'penny to billiards. (*Sighs, continues dreamily.*) Ah, I'd gie a trifle to be going to spend this evening at the Dunkery Arms a-halping to sing a chorus with old Joe Steddles and young Jem Whalley and Jack Clouter. Ah, he'd got a fine voice, had old Jack Clouter. Never heard a man sing so loud in all my life. Lord, I shall never forget her's doing "Rock me to sleep, mother," round at the lodge, and a waking up mother Hammond's three kids just as her'd got un all off to sleep. Lord, how her let us have it. (*Laughing.*) Ah, us went home early that night. (*Chuckling.*) They comed back wi' me, old Jack and Jim, and Deb made us a veal pasty for supper. (*Smiling.*) Ah, her do make good—

(*Enter* PETERS, *followed by* PURTWEE, *door* C., *says,* "Mr. Purtwee," *takes* P.'s *hat and exit.* ALLEN *rises and commences to pick up his various articles of apparel and refix them while talking to* PURT.)

PURT. (*Coming forward.*) Well, my boy.

ALLEN. Ah, it does me good to see thee again.

PURT. How are you?

ALLEN. (*Shakes hands.*) Oh, I be all right outside. (*Rises, crosses to* L.) Bean't very spry inside, so I tell 'ee. (*Explanatory of his dressing arrangements.*) Just been having a quiet smoke, you know.

PURT. (*With a smile.*) And do you always undress to smoke?

ALLEN. (*Laughing.*) No—but I has to now when I want to sit down comfortable. (*Continues to dress—brings wine down to table.*) Have a glass of wine. I'm glad thee've come, I wur afraid from thy letter that thee wouldn't.

PURT. (*Sits in arm-chair* L.) Well, it's a very informal proceeding I'm bound to say—not at all professional.

ALLEN. Perhaps not, but it's simple and straightforward like and maybe that's as good. Have 'ee read the papers I sent thee?

PURT. Yes—most carefully—and they certainly make the story appear very plausible—very plausible, indeed. Have you said anything to your mother?

ALLEN. No—no, I thought I wouldn't say a word to anybody until I was sure one way or t'other. (*Sits* L.)

PURT. Quite right—quite right. What sort of a man was he?

ALLEN. Blest if I could tell 'ee—I wur that taken

aback I couldn't tell 'ee what it wur, but thee'll see him for theeself in a minute. I told Father Christmas to send him straight up when he comes.

PURT. (*Looking at his watch.*) Well, if he's an impostor, he'll hardly venture to come to a meeting of this kind.

(*Enter* PETERS *announcing* RICHARD HANNINGFORD, *door at back.*)

PET. Mr. Richard Hanningford.

(*Exit* PETERS.)

HANN. Morning, gentlemen. (ALLEN *goes* R.C. HANN. *goes* C.)

ALLEN. Good-morning. (*Motioning to* PURT., *who is* L.) Mr. Purtwee, the gentleman I spoke of.

HANN. Good-morning. (C. *and then coming* R. *sits* L.C.) Guess I'm not a particularly welcome visitor here.

ALLEN. (R.) Well, I owns as I've come across folks as I've felt more at home wi'. (ALLEN *sits* R.) But I suppose we've got to get used to 'ee.

PURT. Well now, gentlemen, we've come for business and must not waste time. Mr. Rollitt has told you who I am, and if you are Richard Hanningford I shall be only too anxious for you to have your rights. But then, my dear sir, I shall want to be very sure that you are Richard Hanningford.

HANN. That's right and square. I've got to prove it, I know, and I don't say that it will be an easy job.

PURT. At present you see we have nothing but your bare word for it. You say this man who called himself Richard Hanningford and who died at Mrs. Rollitt's was an impostor.

HANN. And a damned scoundrel.

PURT. Quite so, if he were not Richard Hanningford, he must have been. But then if he were Richard Hanningford—

HANN. Why then, I am the damned scoundrel.

PURT. Well—I wasn't going to say that—but one of you must be the right Hanningford—and the other the wrong one—and if we made a mistake three months ago we don't want to make another now.

ALLEN. (R.) You see it ain't so much the money I care about. There was a time that I thought it would be a grand thing to be rich, but now I've tried it, danged if I see so much fun in it as I thought there wur. (*Rises.*) It ain't only that: it's the girl I love—if I lose the money, I loses her. I can't expect her to have me wi'out it. She's

a lady—I'm only a country bumpkin and I know it. With this money I can win her and make her life happy—even if she doesn't much care for me. If I were sure you were Dick Hanningford, I'd gie it up. But I ain't sure and I'm going to fight—that's plain. (*Turns and crosses* R. *Sits* R.C.)

HANN. (*Goes to* ALLEN R.C.) Plain and sensible, and I don't like you any the less for it; but I am Dick Hanningford, and the money's mine, and I'm going to have a good fight to get it. (*Goes* L. *puts foot on chair.*)

PURT. (*After a pause.*) You say this man who tried to—and, as he thought, did—murder you—had been a friend of yours.

HANN. (*Fiercely—takes foot off chair.*) He'd been my chum for over two years—the cur—and knew everything about me—I saved his life when the gang were going to hang him—he shared my diggings when we were in the mining lay, and he had half my blanket every night when we were with the cattle. And I trusted him—the skunk.

PURT. What was his name?

HANN. Cassidy—Dan Cassidy. (*Sits again.*)

PURT. And then he murdered you—or tried to as you say—took your papers from you, and came over here to impersonate you?

HANN. I suppose so.

ALLEN. He was uncommonly like you, too.

HANN. Like me! Not at all!

PURT. Oh, yes, my dear sir, I never saw him alive, but his features were yours one for one.

HANN. Dan Cassidy was no more like me than I'm like a colored angel out of a picture book.

(PURT. *and* ALLEN *exchange glances.*)

ALLEN. Well, all I know is, that if the man who called himself Richard Hanningford, and who fell down dead in my mother's kitchen three months ago was standing beside you now, nobody would know which wur you and which wur him.

HANN. (*Rising.*) I don't know that man! (*All rise and look at one another.*)

(*Enter* PETERS C.)

PURT. (*Pause.*) Then what has become of Dan Cassidy?

PETERS. Mr. Luke Cranbourne is downstairs, sir, and would like to see you.

ALLEN. Oh, bother Luke Cranbourne—tell him I'm out.

PETERS. Yes, sir. (*Going. As he is by door.*)

ALLEN. Stop! (PETERS *turns.*) Ask Mr. Cranbourne to come back in a quarter of an hour. (*Looks at watch.*)

PETERS. Yes, sir. (*Exit* C.)

ALLEN. What sort of a man was Dan Cassidy?

HANN. A pale, dark-eyed man with a long black beard.

ALLEN. Would you know him again without the black beard, and under another name?

HANN. (*Fiercely.*) Know him! Will you bring me face to face with him?

ALLEN. Maybe I will.

HANN. (C.) See here! I've lived among a set that like to wipe off a score, no matter what the price. You put that man into my hands so that justice may be done on him, and we share the old man's money between us. (*Crosses* R.)

ALLEN. Is that a bargain?

PURT. You don't suspect—(*goes to* R. *of* L. *table.*)

ALLEN. (*Crosses to* PURT. HANN. *goes* R.) Yes I do. He's been no friend of mine. Is it a bargain?

HANN. Yes. Without Dan Cassidy my case might be hard to prove. With him it would be easy. £100,000 and my revenge are good enough for me. You give me that. (*Goes to extreme* R.)

(*Enter* DEXTER *from door* C. *He draws back on seeing strangers, and stands* R. C.)

DEX. Beg pardon, my dear boy. Found the door open (ALLEN *goes up* C. *to* DEX.) and took the liberty of an old friend to walk in. Thought I should find you alone.

ALLEN. (*Crosses up* C.) Shall be in a minute, Colonel, if you will excuse me. (*Draws the two men together near fireplace,* ALLEN *nearest,* PURT. *next,* HANN. R.) Can thee play billiards?

HANN. I can, but I don't crave for them at this particular moment.

ALLEN. You'll just have time to play fifty up afore the man as I takes to be Dan Cassidy is here.

PURT. How will you let us know?

ALLEN. (*Looks round thinking, then catches sight of glasses on table* L.*; takes one up and holds it over hearth.*) Keep thee ears open, and when thee hears this glass fall and break, open the door and come in. (*All go up* C. *speaking low.*)

(*Exit* PURT. *and* HANN. DEX. *goes* L.)

ALLEN. (*Returning* C.) Well, Colonel Dexter, what do thee want? Glad to see thee, thee know.

DEX. (L.C.) Nothing, dear boy—nothing for myself. I have only brought a letter from my little girl, and am to

take back an answer. (*Produces letter and hands to* ALLEN.) I'm only Cupid to you young folks. Ha! Ha! Only Cupid.

ALLEN. Ah, they usen't to wrap 'em up so much when I wur young. (*Crosses* R., *opens and reads letter.*)

DEX. (*Who is very much wrapped and buttoned up, laughs with much ostentation.*) Ha! Ha! Very good, very good. We really must bring you out more, Allen. Ha! Ha! Ha!

ALLEN. (*Who has sat* R. *in front of desk, reading.*) "My darling Popsy-wopsy." (*Looks up puzzled and round at* DEX. *Aside.*) That ain't Clara's usual style. (*Reads.*) "I am so terribly sorry to worry my own darling boy, but I am in such fearful trouble—I want £100 to pay some debts owing to a wicked man having cheated us. Would my own darling lend it to his broken-hearted little blossom, and don't say anything to me afterwards until I pay you back, as I shall be so ashamed of it. I send papa with this. He knows nothing about it, so please don't tell him—he is so proud.—(ALLEN *looks at* DEX., *who turns away and tries to assume airy unconsciousness*)—and would be so angry with me, but you are the only friend I have. Oh, my darling, do let me have the money or I shall go mad. A million, million kisses to my own sweet, precious lubby-dubby from his ever loving little birdie, Clara." (DEX. *sits* C.) "P. S.—Please don't cross the cheque." (*Takes cheque-book from desk and begins to write.*) Was Clara ill when she wrote this?

DEX. (*Who is sitting at table* L.C. *having wine.*) No, my dear boy—oh, no.

ALLEN. Oh, because the writing seems a bit shaky like, and the letter so funny—thought maybe she wur a bit queer.

DEX. (*Confused.*) Oh—ah—yes. She was a little queer—very shaky indeed—and she seemed very much worried, too, she wouldn't tell me what about. She tries to keep all her trouble away from her old father, dear child. (*Enter* CLARA *unseen by either.*) Ah, I know how anxiously she's waiting for me now. "Come back soon, dear, dear papa," she said—"and bring it with you." (*Crying* R.C.)

(ALLEN *having put the cheque in an envelope rises and crosses and holds it to* DEX. CLARA *steps forward and takes it.*)

CLARA. Thank you! (C. *of the two men.*)

ALLEN. Miss Dexter!

DEX. Clara!

CLARA. This letter is addressed to me, I believe. (*Opens it and takes out cheque, which she returns to* ALLEN.) It's very kind of you, Mr. Rollitt, but I do not require it.

ALLEN. (R.) Didn't thee write for it? (*Showing letter to her.*) Isn't this thy letter?

CLARA. (*Looking at it.*) It is the first time I have seen it. It has the appearance of having been written by someone who was drunk over night—possibly my father—imitating other people's handwriting is one of the few things at which he has attained eminence. (*Looks at* DEX.)

DEX. Clara, my dear!

CLARA. And perhaps it will be better, Mr. Rollitt, for me to take this opportunity of ending our relationship by telling you that I am already married. (*Crosses* L.)

ALLEN. (*Starts back.*) Married!

DEX. (C. *frantic and jumping about and screaming and hissing the words out.*) She ain't. It's a lie. Don't believe her. She ain't. She ain't. (*Goes* C. CLARA *to* L.) It's only a trick to try your love. Ah, you hussy! It's all been planned. This is all part of it. She ain't married. We planned it to test your love for her. Ah, you beast! I'll strangle you. I'll murder you. She's only trying it on to see what you say. It's a trick. Don't believe her. Don't believe her.

CLARA. And have been for the last three years.

DEX. (*As before.*) No, she ain't been, Mr. Rollitt. It's a lie—it's a lie. It's a lie. She says it to spite her old father. Ah you devil, you—

ALLEN. Silence!

DEX. (*Cowed, but continuing in nervous undertone.*) She's not married. I'm her father.

ALLEN. (*Pointing to door* C.) And leave the room—afore I forget thee art an old man. (*Turns him* R. *Backs* DEX. *up to* C. *door.*)

DEX. (*Slinks out muttering.*) She ain't married! It's a lie. It's a lie. (*Repeats till*

(*Exit* DEX. C.)

ALLEN. (*Turning to* CLARA.) What does it all mean?

CLARA. (*Defiantly.*) That I've been playing with you only for the sake of sponging on you. And to get money out of you for my father and husband—I haven't had much myself—and that at last I'm grown tired of it. (*Crosses* R.)

ALLEN. (L.C. *after a pause.*) Thee might have had all the money thee wanted, lass, wi'out deceiving me.

CLARA. (*Falling on her knees before him.*) Forgive

me, Allen, you don't know what my life has been. Dragged up among thieves and sharpers, taught to trick and lie before I could speak plainly, I have never know what truth and honor meant except as a dim longing. All the humanity—all the womanhood—has been dried out of me till I am only the thing you see me—a vulture—a human beast of prey. Ah, Allen, thank God for your sake that I am married and that you have escaped me—forget me—it is the only thing you can do. You can never hate me as I loathe myself—you can never despise me as I shudder at my own life.

ALLEN. (*Puts his hand to his own forehead.*) Poor lass! Poor lass!

CLARA. (*Takes* ALLEN'S *hand, left.*) You are the only man that has been good to me, and I have brought you only pain and shame.

ALLEN. (*Raising her.*) Ah, never mind that, lass. Thee didn't mean to do it. Come! I be more sorry for thee than for myself. I could see what sort of life thee had got around thee, and I wanted to take thee away from it all. I can do so little for thee now. (*Both at cabinet,* ALLEN R.)

CLARA. You have taught me, Allen, that there are good men in the world; forgive me for having taught you that there are bad women. (CLARA *crosses in front of* ALLEN *to* R. *door.*)

ALLEN. Not bad, Clara. I guess thee's been more sinned against than sinning. Thy life has been very dark and thee's stumbled here and there. God grant that it may grow brighter for thee one day.

CLARA. (L.) Ah, Allen, don't keep speaking kindly to me. Don't think kindly of me. Despise me—I can bear that—I am used to it. (*Sits at cabinet.*)

ALLEN. (R.C. *next to* CLARA.) No, lass, I can't do that. I shall allus think kindly of thee. I've loved thee too well to change now—because I knows thy lot's harder than I thought it wur.

CLARA. (*Turns and looks at* ALLEN.) Try not to think of me at all, Allen—I am not worth it—forget me. There is one who loves you better than I could ever do, and who is good and pure. (*Rises.*) You men never see the love that is under your feet—you reach only for what is beyond you. Go back to her, Allen. She will make you a better wife than I could ever have done. (ALLEN *at back of* CLARA *up stage* R.)

ALLEN. (*After a pause.*) Who—who is this man—your husband?

CLARA. Luke Cranbourne! (*She does not look at* ALLEN.)

ALLEN. Luke Cranbourne! (*Looks nervously at door* C. *and then at clock—then crosses to door and stands near it. He assumes to do this naturally and not to let* CLARA *notice his anxiety.*)

CLARA. We were married secretly before he left for America. Not even my father knew it until a day or two ago.

ALLEN. And do you care for him? (ALLEN *at door* C.)

CLARA. With such love as a woman can feel without respect. He was the first that I can remember ever speaking a kind word to me. He is the only human being I have to cling to—and he is good to me in his way. (*Looks up at* ALLEN.) I don't expect we shall ever see each other again. For your sake, I wish we had never met—for myself, my life will always seem a bit brighter for the love that an honest man once had for me.

ALLEN. (*Taking her hand in his.*) Good-bye—if ever thee wants a friend, Allen Rollitt, Woodbarrow Farm, Exmoor, will find him. (*Kissing her on the forehead.*) God bless thee, Clara!

CLARA. Good-bye! (*She goes without a word* R. *After a few seconds enter* LUKE C. *announced by* PET.)

LUKE. (*Coming down.*) How de do, dear boy? (*Shaking hands.* ALLEN *does so listlessly and almost unconsciously.*) I wanted to see you particularly this morning, before I went to the city. I've come across something that will just double your fortune. Here. (*Laying papers on table* L. *and taking up and pouring out a glass of wine.*) You do have such capital wine, Rollitt, I really must help myself to a glass. It is a splendid scheme.

ALLEN. (R.C.) Very like, but we won't discuss it now. (*Taking notes from his pocket-book.*) I want thee to leave by the noon train for the Continent.

LUKE. (*Turns round, face to audience, glass in left hand.*) What's up?

ALLEN. (*Crosses* L. C., *hands him the notes.*) Thy wife can join thee there afterwards. (LUKE *starts and looks hard at* ALLEN.) And thee can get away to Australia, or somewhere in that direction.

LUKE. (*Defiantly.*) And why, pray?

ALLEN. Because there is a man in the next room who be more anxious to see thee than thee may be to see him.

LUKE. What man?

ALLEN. Richard Hanningford.

(LUKE *lets fall the glass.*)

ALLEN. Good God! Thee've given the signal to call him in! Quick! (LUKE *rushes in terror to door at back.*) Not that way. (LUKE *bewildered and helpless with fright, turns wildly about like a hunted thing not knowing which way to fly. Is about to make for other door, when handle of door at back is heard to move.*) Too late—keep where thee art.

LUKE. (*Clinging to* ALLEN'S *arm.*) Save me! (ALLEN *thrusts him behind door at* C. *as it opens and enter* HANN. *and* PURT. *following.* ALLEN *goes* R. HANN. *comes down and stands* C. PURT. *remains near door and is about to close it.*)

ALLEN. (*Who has moved down to* R. C., *nervously, with effort to appear calm and careless.*) Leave the door, Mr. Purtwee, leave the door.

PURT. Wide open? (*Surprised.*)

ALLEN. Yes, yes, it's fearfully hot in here! (*Wiping his brow.*)

HANN. (*Looking at him suspiciously.*) I don't find it so. I think we'll have it shut over this job. (*Turns to door.*)

ALLEN. (*Eagerly.*) No, no! Don't shut it—don't shut it.

HANN. Why not? (*Looks hard at* ALLEN.)

ALLEN. Why—why—don't I tell you. It's so close—so—

(HANN. *crosses, goes to door* C. *and locks it, then returns, eyeing* ALLEN *sternly.* LUKE *has crept behind the curtain, which hangs like a pillar by the side of the door.* ALLEN *watches with intense suspense.*)

HANN. (C.) Well—you gave the signal!

(ALLEN R.C. *a little to front of* HANN. *He keeps in front of* HANN. *all through the scene until* LUKE *has got away and prevents his turning round—he is very excited but tries to appear careless—the result being a slightly hysterical manner. When* LUKE *comes from behind the curtain and while he is crossing* ALLEN *catches* HANN. *by the lapels of his coat and holds and works him round so that his back is to* LUKE. *He grows more and more eager and intense until* LUKE *is off, when he gradually subsides into a quieter manner, but not too suddenly. At* HANN.*'s hint that he has had too much brandy, he catches at the idea to cover his excitement, to acount for his conduct.*)

ALLEN. Yes, my dear fellow—but—but—I wur going to explain to thee—it wurn't the signal—it wur an accident. I dropped the glass by accident. Thee see I had just had a glass of brandy.

HANN. More than one glass, cousin?

ALLEN. (*Laughs loudly.*) Ha! ha! Perhaps it wur two. (*First movement of* LUKE.) (*At this point* LUKE *creeps from behind curtain,* PURT. *sees him and is about to make an exclamation, when* ALLEN, *covering his action by assumed drunkenness, lunges half round and catches* PURT. *on his shoulder, clutching it tightly with his left hand while holding* HANN. *with his right—laughing boisterously all the time.* PURT. *understands and remains silent.* ALLEN *grows more and more excited. Laughs.*) Well, now, look 'ee here, Hanningford. Cousin Dick—my long lost—(*laughs as before and slaps him on the shoulder.* HANN. *impatient half turns round—*ALLEN *seizes his coat with both hands and keeps him round.*) No—no—look thee here, Cousin Dick. Now you say this Cassidy, this creeping, crawling, lying cur, Dan Cassidy, tried to murder thee—(HANN. *again seems as though he would turn round*)—and these papers—these papers that you sent me. Well, I sent 'em on to Purtwee. Ah, he's a sharp one. (*Door clicks after* LUKE*'s exit.*) Purtwee, he'll know who's who. He'll put us right. Won't 'ee, Purtwee, old friend? Won't 'ee—won't 'ee?

(*He slaps* PURT. *on back, laughing boisterously and half staggering forward into* PURT.*'s arms.* LUKE *has got away by door* R., *and from now* ALLEN'S *excitement gradually subsides, and an air of exhaustion follows. Sits* L.C.)

HANN. (C.) Say! Are you drunk or playing the fool? Where's this man Cassidy?

ALLEN. (*Pause.*) I don't know.

HANN. Isn't he coming here?

ALLEN. No!

HANN. (*Angrily.*) Didn't you lead me to believe—

ALLEN. That you should be brought face to face wi' him? Yes—but I've changed my mind since then.

HANN. (*After a pause.*) I understand: it was only a trick to give you time to get him out of the way. You thought that without him I should not be able to prove my case. I thought I was dealing with an honest man and a friend, and I offered to share the money with you. (*With fierce anger.*)

ALLEN. (*Fiercely, rising.*) And I tell you to take the whole of it! (*A pause—*HANN. *steps back and stares at him.*) I have learnt enough within the last few minutes to believe that you are the man you say you are, and if so, take it all. You offered me £100,000 to give thee Dan Cassidy, I offer thee £200,000 to let him go his way in peace. (*Pause.*) Come, you may find it hard to prove

thee art Hanningford afore the law. Prove it to me and Mr. Purtwee, and give me thy hand on it that thee'll never seek to find Dan Cassidy or harm him, and thee art old Hanningford's heir, and I, Allen Rollitt, farmer and yeoman.

HANN. (*After a pause.*) Your secrets are your own, cousin. I'd dearly have loved to have my revenge upon the hound, but if Dan Cassidy is worth £100,000 to you, you can have him—I shouldn't have thought he was.

ALLEN. He goes free, so far as you are concerned, for ever?

HANN. For ever.

ALLEN. Right, Dick Hanningford! (*They grasp hands.*) And now we'll say good-bye for to-day if you don't mind. Mr. Purtwee will see thee to-morrow, and arrange things. I'd like to be quiet a bit just now.

HANN. You've had a rough morning, cousin, and I guess the kindest thing I can do is to take myself off. Good-bye. (*Shakes hands.*) Good-bye, Mr. Purtwee.

PURT. Good-bye, Mr. Hanningford; I will write to you to-morrow.

HANN. (*Goes to door* C.) No hurry. Good-bye.

(*Exit* C.)

PURT. Well, I can't understand you, my boy. It's really a very Quixotic thing to do. Why shouldn't the man suffer for his crime?

ALLEN. (L.) Because he can't suffer without bringing suffering to them as I'd rather spare—because he's the husband of the woman I have been calling Clara Dexter.

PURT. (*Astonished.*) You don't say that, lad! When did you learn it?

ALLEN. About five minutes ago. (*Crosses to* R.*; leans on chair.*)

PURT. (*After a pause.*) Hanningford said true; it's been a rough morning for you. (*Going up to* ALLEN *and laying his hand on his shoulder.*) Would you rather that I stopped with you a bit, lad, or left you alone?

ALLEN. Leave me alone, old friend. (PURT. *goes to* C. *door.*) I shall be off soon.

PURT. (*At door* C.) Where are you going to?

ALLEN. I'm going back to Woodbarrow Farm. I've had eno' of the big world. I've had enough of fine folks and their ways. I'm going back to my own people—I'm going back to see the faces of them as I know loves me, to feel the hands of them as I know thinks well of me—I'm going back home.

L. of C.

(PURT. *exit* R., ALLEN *stands* L. *by fire, stage darkens, and scene changes. Slow tableau. Music plays till change of scene and through Scene* 2.)

SCENE 2. *Same as* ACT I. *Time, evening, fire burning brightly, and lamp lit on table, where supper is laid.* DEB. *discovered by fire, attending to cooking operations;* MRS. R. *by fire, laying supper.*

MRS. R. Be it done, lass?

DEB. (*Who is kneeling down, looking into oven.*) Yes, aunt, just to a turn.

MRS. R. (*Crossing and looking over* DEB.'s *shoulder.*) Ah, that be just right. Thee's a good cook, lass. (*Crossing back to table.*) Ah, how un used to like a veal pasty. (*Sighs.*)

DEB. It's a bad thing going to bed, though, ain't it, aunt?

MRS. R. Ah, anything be bad for them as ain't got no stomachs, and underdone bricks be all right for them as has. (*Gets dishes from dresser; lays table.*) Besides, we bain't going to bed yet. Us'll sit and have a chat after supper.

DEB. It seems so lonely of an evening here now. (*Looking into fire.*)

MRS. R. (*In front of table* R. C.) So it do, lass. (*Crossing* L.) Ah, the lads bean't so big to look at, but they leaves a rare space behind 'em when they goes away.

DEB. (*After a pause, still gazing dreamily into fire.*) I wonder if he'll ever come back.

MRS. R. Aye, aye; he'll come back, never fear.

DEB. (*Turns.*) What, to stop?

MRS. R. (L. *sits on settle.*) Ah, to stop.

DEB. What makes you think so, aunt?

MRS. R. I dunno. It's never seemed real to me, any on it. I'm awaiting every day to hear un lift the latch and walk in to find as it had all been a dream. So I allus lays for three (L.)

(*Enter* ALLEN C. *He is dressed much as in Act 1. He shuts the door and stands by it.*)

ALLEN. Well, mother. (C.)

MRS. R. (L. *staring at him.*) Allen, lad! (*Bewildered, not grasping it.* DEB. *having risen, stands with the hot pie that she has that moment taken from the oven, transfixed* R.)

ALLEN. (*At door* C.) I've come home, you see, to stop—for good. Are thee glad to see me, mother?

MRS. R. (L.) Come home! To stop! For good! Ah! (*Rushes across with a cry of joy and hugs him up* C.) I said he would—I said he would—I said he would. My boy! My boy! (*After a pause.*) And—and all the money, and—and Miss Dexter?

ALLEN. (*Taking off his hat and throwing it down at back.*) Shadows, mother, that have passed away, out of my life, for ever. I'll tell thee all about it later on, never mind to-night. Let's think only about ourselves. (*Going to* DEB. R.) Are thee glad to see me?

(MRS. R. *pushes them together from behind* R. DEB. *still with pie in her hands, puts her face up.* ALLEN *bends and kisses it.* MRS. R. *catches the two in her arms, and embraces both at once, laughing.* DEB. *holds pie out at arm's length to save it.*)

ALLEN. Mind the pie, mother.

MRS. R. (*Still embracing them.*) Are thee hungry, lad?

ALLEN. Rather.

MRS. R. Bless un, and thee've come back just in time for supper, as thee allus used to. (*Laughs, sits up stage, top of table.*) Can thee eat veal pasty?

ALLEN. Can I eat veal—(*taking off overcoat and throwing it on chair* R. C.) Let me get at un, that's all.

MRS. R. Poor boy! Come and sit 'ee down. (*Pushing him in chair* L. *of table.*) Where be the potatoes, Deb.?

DEB. (*Bewildered, turns round and round.*) I don't know. (*Laughs.*)

MRS. R. Well, have a look in the saucepan, then. (*Sits back of table* R. C. ALLEN L. DEB. R.) Thee won't find 'em by turning round and round. Now come lad, and get a bit inside thee. Us'll do the talking afterwards.

(DEB. *potters about between fire and table in a bewildered manner. She brings potatoes, and puts them in front of* ALLEN.)

ALLEN. Ah, it do smell lovely, don't it? (*Sniffing at pie.*)

MRS. R. Never thee mind smelling it, thee taste it. Lud, how thin thee art looking, lad. (*To* DEB. *who is almost doing so.*) Don't pour the beer into the pie, child, and look where thee's put the potatoes! (*Takes jug away from her.*)

DEB. (*Sitting down, laughing.*) I don't know what I'm doing. (*Takes saucepan off table.*)

MRS. R. Well, us can see that.

ALLEN. And how's everything been going on? How's the colt?

MRS. R. Kicked Parsons clean into the ditch yester-morning, the little dear! (*All are now seated.*)

ALLEN. No, did un? (*Laughs.*)

DEB. One of the guinea hens is dead, the little one of all.

ALLEN. What, the one as used to squint?

DEB. Yes, Parsons left his shot on the pigstye wall, and she ate two ounces. Oh, and you remember Jim?

ALLEN. What, the bantam?

DEB. Yes. He's given his own father such a licking, and won't let him come near the yard.

ALLEN. (*Laughing heartily.*) Plucky little beggar! Serve the old 'un right. He wur always a bully. Now, mother—(*about to hand her the pie.*) Why, mother, thee art crying!

MRS. R. (*Crying.*) No, I ain't. Go on with thee supper, lad.

ALLEN. (*Looking at* DEB.) And—why, here be Deb. crying too!

(*The two women laugh through their tears.* ALLEN *joins them as curtain descends.*)

MRS. R. It's wi' joy, lad; it's wi' joy!

SLOW CURTAIN.

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